

BARDS OF THE  
GAEL AND GALL  
DR SIGERSON



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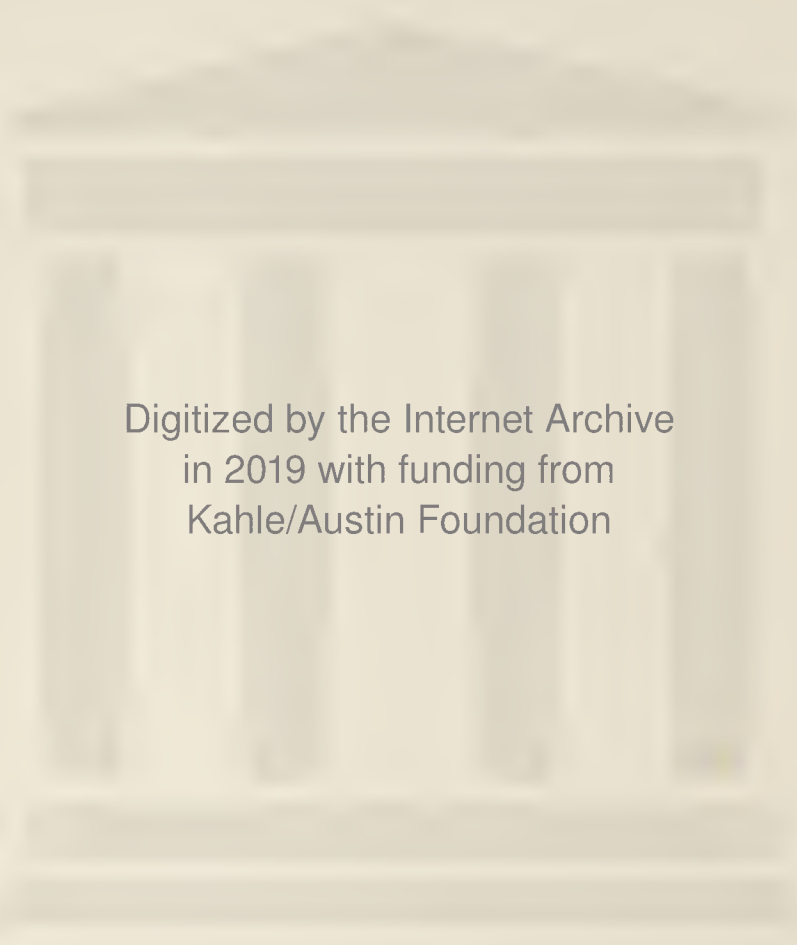
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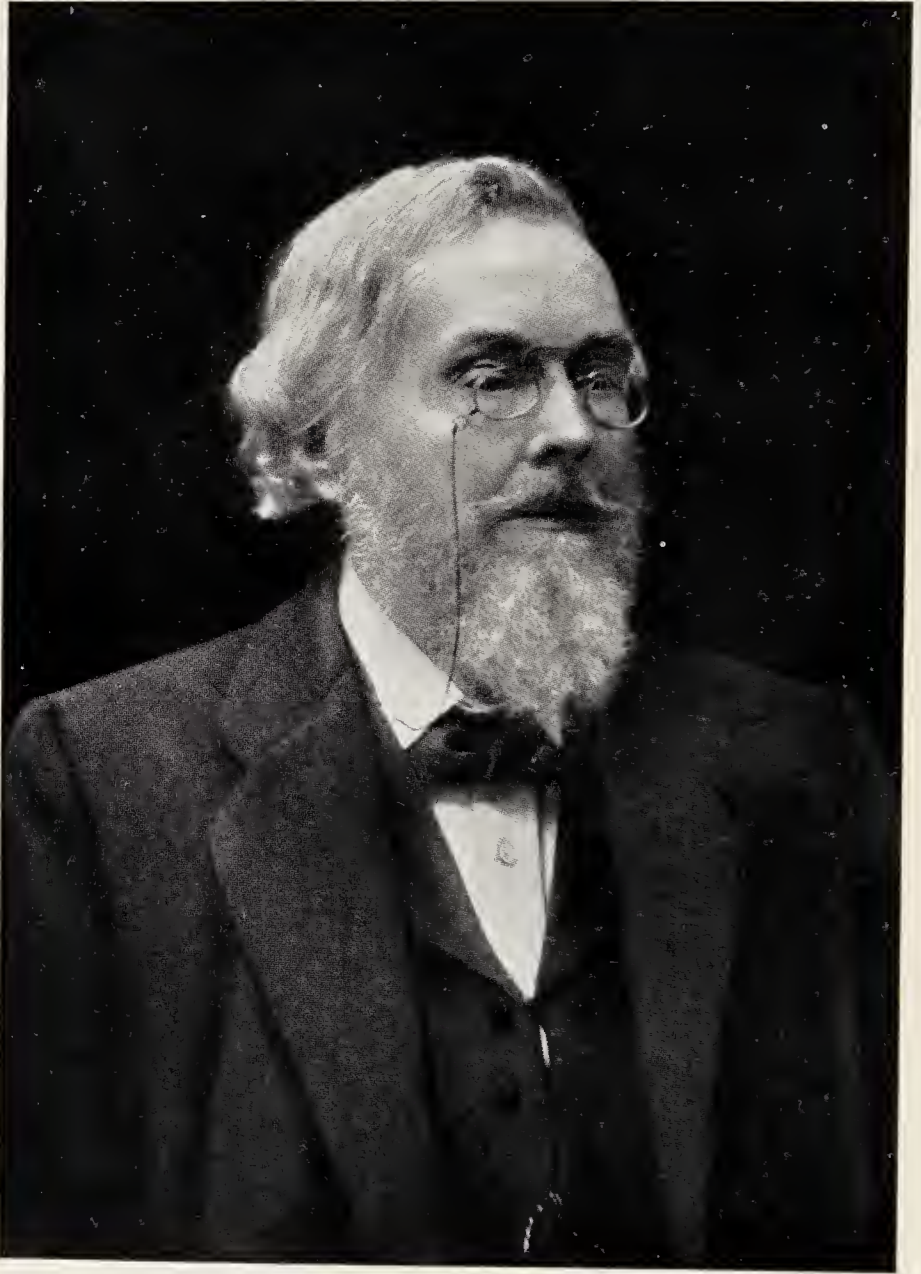


BARDS OF THE GAEL AND GALL.



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*Sturtevant*

BARDS  
OF THE  
GAEL AND GALL

EXAMPLES OF THE  
POETIC LITERATURE OF ERINN

DONE INTO ENGLISH AFTER THE METRES AND  
MODES OF THE GAEL

BY  
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La Société de Psychologie Physiologique  
de Paris, etc.

THIRD EDITION

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DR. DOUGLAS HYDE

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## GEORGE SIGERSON

BORN ON JANUARY 11, 1836—DIED ON FEBRUARY 17, 1925.

### A MEMORIAL PREFACE.

By PROFESSOR DOUGLAS HYDE, LL.D. D.LITT.

[AN CRAOIBHIN.]

THE remarkable man who passed away from amongst us on the 17th of February, 1925, has left a gap in our midst that cannot be filled. He was as it were a giant oak which had seen generations of lesser trees grow around it and pass away, and its own fall in the fulness of years has left vacant the space which had been adorned by its stately presence. The most notable link that connected the Ireland of to-day almost with the Ireland of Penal times, and certainly with the Ireland of nearly three quarters of a century ago, has been at last snapped. Full of old age and well-deserved honours and reverence and love this outstanding figure has departed from amongst us.

So many were his attainments and so various his interests that it is difficult properly to appraise them; but the most striking thing about him, taken as a whole, was his own career, during which he worked incessantly, never wavering in his affection

for things Irish, never halting in giving his allegiance and best service to the cause of mankind and of his own country. As an Irish scholar he was the last link that connected us with the era of O'Donovan and O'Curry, and one of the last that connected us with the men of '48, with Kickham and with Mitchel. He had known them all, shared their counsels and aspirations, befriended and sheltered many of them, and could tell of them from the intimacy of close association in a way that was the privilege of no other living person.

He was not the child of any one province; he was all-Ireland, and one might even say cosmopolitan. Born and reared near Strabane, but with a Kerry ancestry, educated partly in Galway, partly in Cork, and later on in Paris, he typified all that was best and broadest and sanest in our race. He always boasted that he came from the old Norse. He often told me that Sigerson was only Sicar's or Sigurd's—son, and that though his people had been in Ireland for many hundreds of years they had never changed, as most other families had done, the "son" for "mac," or made out of Sigurd's son Mac Sigir. His northern upbringing was betrayed in his speech, which was deliberate and rather slow, never by any accident outrunning his thought, as so often happens amongst our Milesians, but rather labouring behind it; a characteristic which had at least the effect of imparting to what he said an air of considered conviction.

George Sigerson was born at Holyhill, near Strabane on the 11th of January, 1836. His family was of Kerry origin. They were settled at Ballin-

skelligs, where their graves are to be seen in the old Abbey, and where the remains of their ruined castle still stand out gaunt and grey against the western sea. One Christopher Sigerson appears amongst the list of the transplanted Irish in 1654, and Dr. Sigerson was probably of the same family. If so, heredity would sufficiently account for his strong national sympathies. He received his early schooling in Strabane. After that we find him at Auteuil in France in the first years of Napoleon III, probably in 1852-1853. He there gained a school prize for Latin verse, and it is an interesting coincidence, showing already what was the drift of his mind, that it was for a translation of "The Exile of Erin" he won it. Few careers are more striking in their continuity than his, for he was thinking of or working for his country all the time. The prize was presented to him, as he well remembered, by the grand aumônier of the Emperor, and he had a vivid recollection of his travelling home from France in the blue uniform of a scholar worn at that period.

He matriculated in the Queen's University in 1855, when he was eighteen years old. In '59 we find him attending surgery lectures of the final year in the Catholic University School of Medicine in Cecilia Street, Dublin. In this year also he gained First Honours in Celtic, apparently in a special examination held *ad hoc*. There appears to have been at that time an Honours prize in Celtic and another in Sanscrit. Sigerson got First Honours in Celtic, and another man First Honours in Sanscrit, and in the Calendar they are

bracketed *ex aequo*. These awards in Celtic and Sanscrit appear to have been introduced in 1852, and not to have been continued beyond 1864.

In 1859, after taking his M.D. in Queen's University, Sigerson appears to have gone to France, probably to do post-graduate work for a couple of years. In after times he dedicated some of his medical work to his beloved master Duchenne (de Boulogne), under whom he must at this time have been studying. He was also, either then or later on, in close touch with Charcot at La Salpêtrière; but as Charcot, born in 1825, was at this time a comparatively young man, it is probable that Sigerson studied diseases of the nervous system under him at a somewhat later period. In advanced life he used to refer to Charcot more than to any of his teachers, and he paid back his debt to his master by translating his book on Nervous Diseases, with valuable notes of his own, in the New Sydenham Society Series. At this time the famous French zoologist, Milne Edwards, took a leading place in Natural Science, and the still more famous Claude Bernard in physiology, and Sigerson was deeply imbued with the spirit of their work. His studies in science and in medicine were conducted along the lines of these great masters. His outlook on science was a French outlook; his attitude towards medicine was a French attitude. In other words he blended theory with actual practice, and applied theory to actual practice in a manner very different from that of the English or the Germans, who tend to dissociate the two things. It is almost certain that had Sigerson been

attached—which he never was—to a large hospital he would have been one of the outstanding physicians of these islands.

All through his career he must have been conscious of a divided allegiance between Science and Literature. As he lived and worked, he grew from strength to strength; and Ireland, which was never out of his thoughts, became ever more and more his debtor. He was an early and continuous worker in the cause of an Irish National University. An article of his in the *North British Review* was quoted by Gladstone, and Dr. Coffey told me that the late President of Maynooth was convinced that another very able article of his in the same review must have been written by Lord Acton. His research work in physiology and pathology was known and quoted by men like Professor Senator of Vienna and Dr. Nothnagel of Berlin; the latter in his book on *Gehirnkrankheiten* adopts Dr. Sigerson's classification. But he was better known in France, where Paul Bert, the physiologist, proposed him for the membership of the Clinical Society, Paris, and Charcot for the membership of the Society of Physiology and Psychology, and Henri Martin, the historian, for the membership of the Anthropological Society. Tyndall said that his researches revealed the true nature of organisms in the atmosphere whose presence he himself had detected, and Darwin proposed him for election as a Fellow of the Linnean Society.

But deeply interested as he was in science, his early love, I think, was literature, and he never neglected it to the day of his death. Nor can it

be said of him that pure literature had more attraction for him at one period of his life than at another. In him his mind was so broad and his genius so varied, and the elements so kindly mixed, that Science, Economics, History, and Poetry all through his life appealed to him with almost equal force, though I have a suspicion that the appeal of poetry was the strongest.

As far back as 1860 we find him engaged upon his first literary effort and one that appealed to him with peculiar force. A dozen years previously John O'Daly had published a volume called "The Poets and Poetry of Munster," for which Clarence Mangan wrote the English translations in verse. Sigerson now proposed to take up the work of Mangan, O'Daly no doubt supplying the texts. O'Daly was a fine Irish scholar of the old traditional type, and had acquired as a result of ceaseless searching a great number of Irish MSS. He had made an excellent collection of poetry out of these for Mangan. He now laid his collection before Sigerson, and between them they produced the "Second Series" of "The Poets and Poetry of Munster." Sigerson wrote his own preface and many of the notes, all interesting, and translations into English verse of forty-six poems.

Sigerson dedicated this book "To my Father," but he does not write under his own name. Why was this? It is pretty certain that a volume of the kind, with its outspoken preface, would have been no good credential for a professional man about to set up in the Dublin of the 'sixties. He had the excellent taste to include no poem because of its



melody only. He is very frank in his judgment on the everlasting Jacobite poetry; much of it, he says, is mere plagiarism, one imitating the other, only in different metres to suit different tunes. "The minor bards were too much attracted (like many of the present day) by smoothness of versification and fine sonorous words, and being able to produce such, many have had their lucubrations preserved which ought to have been cast away. Where the heart was the cause of the song the result, as this little volume will I hope show, is very different." At the conclusion of his preface he writes as follows:—"If the opinions I have expressed above and through the body of the work seem too favourable to these Celtic compositions as peasant-ballads, they cannot be attributed to a Celt's or Momonian's partiality. For the translator is an Ulsterman and of Viking race, deriving from their publication no other gain than an increase of respect and love for the delicacy, devotion, and chivalry of a much-maligned people." These words alone are enough to show us that young Sigerson was already a student of Irish literature, for they seem borrowed almost directly from the passage in Keating's "Díonbhrollach" to his History of Ireland, in which he begs the reader not to ascribe anything he says to race-partiality, as he himself was not a Milesian at all but of the Anglo-Norman race, and wrote only because he saw the Irish so maligned.

It is probable that Sigerson from this time forward kept in view the publication of further translations from the Irish. I made his acquaint-

ance when I was a student, and he used sometimes to read me a poem. I had the pleasure of dedicating my *Love Songs of Connacht* to him in 1894, thirty-four years after his own work had appeared, no translated book of Irish poetry having been published during that long interval. Three years later he produced his magnum opus the *Bards of the Gael and Gall*, which—*parvis componere magna*—he dedicated to Gavan Duffy and to myself as representing the Gael and Gall respectively. In this new book he gave us translations of 139 Irish poems, a long vista of bardic compositions, leading back and ever back, from the present into the dim remote almost mythological past. It was a splendid thought to take the reader by the hand and conduct him along a road the like of which could scarcely be travelled over in any other land in Europe. He begins with three lays of the Milesian Invaders and then goes on to the Cuchulainn period (about the time of Christ), then to the Finn period (about three centuries later), then to the Ossianic poems, then to poems of the “Christian Dawn” and the “Early Christian” pieces, then to poems of the Gael and Norse (this is perhaps the best section in the book), and after that to the “Gael and Norman,” thence into the 17th century, the 18th century, songs of the emotions, folk songs, and finally two paraphrases from the Gaelic.

In a long preface Dr. Sigerson sustains the interesting thesis, which he later on elaborated more fully in his *Sedulius*, that the early Irish poets who used Latin were more or less consciously making verse after Irish models, with end rhyme and an

obvious tendency towards alliteration. This was always a pet theory of Dr. Sigerson's, but I do not think it can be substantiated, at least not in its entirety. If Sedulius wrote

*A solis ortus cardine  
Adusque terrae limitem*

we cannot believe, as Sigerson believed, that the poet meant a rhyme or assonance between the unstressed syllables “-ine” and “-item,” or when he wrote

*Beatus auctor seculi  
Servile corpus induit*

the Latin poet surely did not mean the wholly unstressed *u* of “seculi” to rhyme with the equally unstressed *u* of “induit.” It is on the “in-” and the “sec-” that the stress falls. He did not pronounce “induit” as rhyming with “he knew it.” On the other hand I think that his editor appears to be justified in calling attention to the proneness to alliteration, and to the “Conachlon” of Ausonius as being possibly of Celtic origin. But when he thinks that Sedulius, a younger contemporary of St. Ambrose (A.D. 340-397), wrote in such wise that, without a knowledge of Irish metric, we cannot duly appreciate his verses, he is going too far. “The Golden Bough for us,” says his editor, “is the Gaelic metric. Without some knowledge of this it is impossible to identify and understand the true character of Sedulian verse; possessing this it is impossible not to see and affirm that Sedulius was a poet trained in the

Irish methods.”\* But it is now sufficiently established that the Irish, although they were the first nation to use rhyme in their own language, and although they brought it to a pitch of perfection never dreamt of by other nations, did not themselves use it in the fourth, fifth, sixth, or possibly even the seventh century, and all the laws of Irish metric as expressed in the rules of Dán Díreach were of much later origin.

Between science and pure literature lay the great field of philanthropy and politics, and in this domain Sigerson was no less distinguished. He had, as quite a young man, been chosen along with T. D. Sullivan to present a magnificent sword of honour to General Patrick MacMahon destined to become the first President of the French Republic.

Sigerson had at this time a great admiration for Mitchel, made him Paris correspondent of the *Irishman*, and arranged for the publication of his *Last Conquest (Perhaps)* in serial form in the same paper. This was the weekly journal to which Sigerson contributed so many excellent leading articles. The famous article “The Holocaust,” written on the execution of Allen, Larkin, and O’Brien, and published on November 23, 1867, immediately after the news reached Dublin, created something of a sensation. At this time and for some years before, he used to contribute poems and essays to many Irish publications, the *Nation*, the *Shamrock*, Duffy’s

\* *The Easter Song of Sedulius*, p. 212.

*Hibernian Magazine*, and the *Irish People*, which last was the organ of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. I think the *Irishman*, before Pigott the forger got hold of it, was the paper to which he most contributed. I was told that at one time he was writing nearly all the leading articles for it.

I suppose that, with an ever-growing clientèle and the pressure of his University work, he gradually gave up ephemeral writing and interested himself in the bigger things of literature. He was appointed Medical Commissioner to the Dublin Mansion House Committee when Ireland was threatened with a famine, and typhus broke out over the West, in 1879-80. He and the late Dr. Kenny made a minute tour of the districts affected, chiefly Mayo. One incident of his procedure I heard which will show the common-sense, if rather rough-and-ready way in which he met difficult situations. A young man was lying a helpless cripple on a bed which he had not left for six years. Sigerson immediately suspected that it was a case of nerves. The house was full of people, and a big fire blazed on the hearth. In this fire, with much ceremony and to the great amazement of the company, he heated a plough-share that he found lying on the floor until it became white-hot. He then caused the young man to be laid face downward on the bed and all the bed-clothes taken off. He next drove every one out of the house, seized the white-hot coulter from the fire, and with furious air and gesture ran at the young man, and before he could move inflicted as quick as lightning half a dozen pricks of the hot iron up his spine. The

patient uttered one frantic howl, leapt off the bed, burst out through the door, and tore away at full speed. Sigerson came back to the same place some years afterwards and found him happily married with a large family. His diagnosis had been correct. It was as a result of his experiences on this tour that he wrote his tract on *The Need and Use of Village Hospitals*.

Three years later he was appointed a member of Lord Spencer's Royal Commission on Prisons. As a result of his labours many improvements were made in the dietary and treatment of prisoners of weak intellect. Reforms inaugurated by him were afterwards, I have been told, adopted largely in England. It was, no doubt, his experiences on this Commission which prompted him to compose his valuable work on political prisoners which appeared in 1890. In this volume he compares the different treatment of different classes of prisoners in the various European countries, and shows that England stood alone in her savage treatment of political misdemeanants.

The land question, which to many at the time seemed *the* Irish question, had already claimed his attention, and he had as early as 1871 published the *History of Land Tenures and Land Classes in Ireland*, the proofs of which were read by Mr. Gladstone, and that statesman found the knowledge he derived from them very useful when introducing his Irish Land legislation; Lecky also quoted it with approval.

In 1891 or 1892 the National Literary Society was founded. The present writer was the first



President of it, and his opening lecture was on the necessity of De-anglicisation. But he resigned when the Gaelic League was founded in 1893, and Dr. Sigerson became President and presided over its fortunes until his death. During these many years he poured forth in his presidential addresses a stream of interesting knowledge upon the most varied subjects—all however connected with Ireland—which when we look back upon it almost takes our breath away. His minute knowledge of the most out-of-the-way facts and the most abstruse problems of history was marvellous. Where did he get it all? He never had many books about him; I hardly ever saw him reading, and yet he knew or seemed to know everything—at least everything connected with Ireland. He was often urged to put the erudition contained in these lectures into a book or books, and I imagine that he intended to do so, if he had lived longer. A friend told me he had seen a letter from Lord Acton, in which he described Sigerson as “the best Irishman I have ever known,” and I believe he pressed him to collaborate with him in his *Cambridge Modern History*. It was Sigerson who wrote for Barry O’Brien’s *Two Centuries of Irish History* the chapter (110 close pages) which deals with the eighteen years which elapsed between the grant of Legislative Independence in 1782 and the Act of Union in 1800, and his presentation of the story is masterly. The first edition of this book appeared in 1888. Thirty years afterwards he elaborated this chapter in the volume called *The Last Independent Parliament of Ireland*, and his

Appendix contains many interesting facts relative to the condition of our fisheries, kelp-making, the bounty system, the curing of fish, the export of fish, the probity of Irish merchants, their enterprise, the Irish salt duties and salt policy, and other matters, all well documented and showing the amazing advances made under a native parliament.

His poem of King Lir written in blank verse, which he published in 1913 as a separate slender volume, is not, in my opinion, a success. There are in it some fine lines, but a great deal that is unequal, and the whole story of the life of the Swans themselves is omitted. His next poem, the translation of Sedulius, is a very ambitious work. For years he was taken up with the thought of it, and its completion gave him great satisfaction. A long preface sets forth the author's theories on metric to which I have already alluded, but contains also much interesting historical matter. Then follows, on a unique principle which I do not remember to have seen carried out before, a rhymed metrical translation of the best passages in the Easter Hymn, none being longer than a couple of pages, while he compresses into a prose résumé in smaller print the long stretches of rather blank hexameters that connect one chosen passage with another. He comments freely and in entertaining manner on his text, as he goes, showing how Sedulius must have had a medical training, must have been familiar with fly-fishing, etc. The poem itself as versified and compressed into prose fills only 60 pages; the rest of the volume (210 pages)

is taken up with the preface and the appendices, in which, amongst other things, he shows how much Milton was indebted to his hero.\*

My personal recollections of Dr. Sigerson date back to my college days. I first saw him with old John O'Leary, to whom he was exceedingly kind, as he was to all who had worked or suffered for Ireland. On the strength of having seen him with O'Leary I plucked up courage and spoke to him one day. He looked hard at me in a very chilling, in fact intimidating manner and said: "You have the advantage of me"; but when I told him I had met him with O'Leary he at once thawed and became friendly, and I flatter myself that I never lost his friendship. Not only was he interested in the Irish language, but also in Irish music. He was one of the founders of the Feis Ceóil. He was interested enough in athletics to give a cup for inter-collegiate competition. His chief relaxation and hobby seemed to be the search for miniatures. His extraordinary and unique collection of Napoleonic and other French miniatures was exhibited for a long time in the National Museum and

\* The following is a specimen of his Versification. It describes Our Lord's visiting the Ruler of the Synagogue whose daughter was sick:—

He reached the Wailing Walls, the House of Sighs  
Where smote by doom the death-pale maiden lies.  
A trembling tumult ululates, of groans  
And bitter cries, the flute funeral sounds  
In weeping dirge, and frequent sound on sound  
Of lamentable blows the place confound.

Then follows a prose commentary. "This," says Sigerson, "is a marvellously exact description of the Irish *caoine*, the wailing dirge, with beating together of hands and mournful music."

attracted great attention. Pictures of French *grandes dames* and French *objects d' art* appealed to him strongly. He used to go to the continent almost every summer and never came back without something new. His house was full up of valuable antiques. He was very sociable and loved to have people to dinner on Sundays. Goethe's words,

*Tages Arbeit, Abends Gäste,  
Saure Wochen frohe Feste,*

seemed to have been his *Zauberwort* also. He certainly worked hard throughout the week. His ante-room was always full of patients, and he continued seeing them until a late hour.

I think he must have done all his literary work late at night, and that he seldom went to bed until near morning. It is fascinating to contemplate his long life as a continuous whole, and to think of all the immense changes that have taken place, in almost every one of which he himself bore a hand: the settling of the land question, the establishment of a National University, the recognition of Irish as the National language, the withdrawal of the English. All these things he worked for, and he saw all of them come to pass. It must have seemed to him almost a miracle when he looked back on the days of his youth and thought of the time when it was wise to refrain from putting his name on the title-page of an Irish book of national tendency.

As a poet he was best as a lyricist. When the late T. W. Rolleston and his father-in-law, Stopford Brooke, brought out their *Treasury of Irish Poetry in the English Tongue*, they commissioned me to

get some poems from Sigerson. It was then I discovered for the first time how sweet and how original a lyrist he was. I sat up with him one night until four o'clock, and he read me a great number of original lyrics, four or five of which entranced me. I picked out three original songs for Rolleston's book, "The Swans of Lir," "The Rowan Tree," and "Far-away," but the editors preferred translations from the Irish and only printed the last one. Where are the others, where are all the poems he read to me that night? I hope sincerely that they are not lost. Lest I be accused of exaggerating his lyric gift, I shall conclude this preface by quoting just two verses from the only one of all those pieces that was, so far as I know, saved and printed. The reader will note the alliteration in them. He was very fond of this device, but neither overdoes nor obtrudes it.

## FAR-AWAY.

As chimes that flow o'er shining seas  
 When Morn alights on meads of May,  
 Faint voices fill the Western breeze  
 With whisp'ring songs from far-away.  
 Oh, dear the dells of Dunanore,  
 And bright is billowy Ballintrae;  
 But sweet as honey, running o'er,  
 The Golden Shore of Far-Away.

There grows the tree whose summer breath  
 Perfumes with Joy the azure air;  
 And he who feels it fears not Death,  
 Nor longer heeds the hounds of care.  
 Oh, soft the skies of Seskinore,  
 And mild is meadowy Melleray;  
 But sweet as honey, running o'er,  
 The Golden Shore of Far-Away.

He came to see me take my seat in the Senate about ten days before his death, and his last words to me, after listening to the discussion for a while, were " This is good work, you know, careful work, sound work." He died in his ninetieth year in the full enjoyment of his faculties, and Ireland will not forget him and cannot replace him.

AN CRAOIBHIN.



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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION



THE first edition of this work had the good fortune to attract the attention and obtain the approval of students of literature in these countries and abroad. An Anthology of translated Gaelic poetry, giving in historical series specimens of verse, from the earliest known to that of recent times, it essayed to present them in the exact spirit, form, and structure of the originals. In this way readers could judge how one of the great Free Nations, whom the Greeks and Romans called Barbarians, thought and sang through countless generations.

This was an extrinsic cause of interest, for Ireland is the sole representative in literature of that great world, which lived and thrived outside the classic camp, whose thoughts have perished with their lives. So far as the native expression and development of the intellect in these subject nations are concerned, Roman rule meant a massacre of mind. Fortunately one country stood unsubdued, though threatened. Agricola, standing on a hill in Britain looking toward the west, planned an expedition against the one surviving Free Nation, with the avowed purpose of extinguishing the last light of Liberty, whose existence troubled the Empire. It made the subject nations restless and dream dreams in their servile sleep. Had his project been successful, the last light of



Literature outside the classic world would also have been destroyed, and the once Free Nations left in dumb darkness. For all who are not confined by the golden chains of classic tradition, who can admire alike the stately Parthenon and the picturesque forest, whose intelligence can welcome the novel work of other minds, the Literature of Ancient Erin has thus a deep and enduring charm.

Beside these considerations stand those of its intrinsic claims. The casual inquirer is disappointed at not meeting with epics like those of Greece and of imitative Rome. But this is its distinction ! It would have been of much less importance if it had been more similar. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that the reason why the Celts did not compose rimed epics was because of their extreme mental modernity. They put their epics in prose, in the form of historical or imaginative romances, and polished, shaped, and set their poetry, not as word-smiths, but as word-jewellers, dealing with gems. The activity and restlessness of our own days were in their blood in all known time. Their contemporaries noticed this trait, and sometimes complained of it. It is vain to blame them for outrunning their age. They were, in truth, the Moderns of the Past—perhaps they are also fated to be the Moderns of the Future.

This quality made them pioneers in poetry. Their artistic skill, which enabled them to produce such admirable effects in gold, silver, and bronze work, and later, illuminations, exquisite in form and colour, was most fully displayed in the art of versification. They introduced rime into European literature, for its sporadic occurrence in Greek and Latin writings counts for nothing ; but they did far more than the word now suggests. They made it the most refined and delicate instrument of artistic structure which the ingenuity of human intelligence could invent to charm, without fatiguing the ear, by the modulation of sound. They avoided in Gaelic

the tinkle of repeated words regularly recurring at the ends of lines. They had echoes and half-echoes of broad and slight vowels, and of consonants, differentiated into classes so that it was not necessary to repeat even the same letter, and these echoing sounds, now full, now slender—rising, falling, replying, swelling, dying, like the echoes at Killarney—came at varied intervals, not merely at the close, but within and between the lines. They constitute Word-music. None but a trained and tuneful ear could appreciate the full art of the ancient poets, which it is impossible to represent in another language. The sense of hearing must have been exceptionally acute and highly cultivated amongst the bardſ. It is almost impossible for a modern ear to appreciate their art. It is known that many persons are more or less completely tune-deaf; others, as I have pointed out elsewhere, are more or less completely rime-deaf; some are rhythm-deaf. Few, however, except musicians, can now even imagine what powers of delicate perceptions have vanished.

They went further, for they invented new forms of grouping verse; they not only avoided the possibility of monotony by varying the number of riming syllables, but they varied the line-lengths. Thus they were the originators of the “broken stave,” where a short line is interposed, just as in music they employed the “gappèd scale.” But their experiments in verse architecture were so numerous and so intricate, as well as so interesting, that Celtic scholars have given essays to the question of Irish metric.

In the themes chosen they appeal to the responsive heart of man. There have been love-songs and war-odes in other ancient languages, but the Gael were the first to recognise the picturesque in scenery and give us nature-songs, to tell of sorrow, to depict the exile’s pang, and to sing the calm and the tumult of ocean.

Like other Literatures, that of Ancient Erin had its phases which it would be of interest to trace. Here one can only indicate some. Whilst the great Bardic Companionship was at its best, composing for a cultured and critical audience, stimulated by emulation as well as inspired by genius, it produced the fine, serried, classic poems, which stand out like chiselled statues. There was a noble idea in every verse, a thought in every line. The inner poetry was not less fair than its apparel. Then came, as in decadent phases elsewhere, a tendency to exalt form over substance, to intricacy of expression and "preciosité" of style. Euphuism was carried to excess and symbolism to obscurity. Thus Dallan, a contemporary of St. Columba, wrote in a manner so cryptic that his poems could not be understood without explanation. Not only did he modify the language so that poetic diction became artificial, but he used archaic words, and abused symbolism in too many instances. Scholars lectured upon his poems, and Browning Societies were anticipated. Satire seized upon these defects. The author of the "Proceeding of the Heavy Company," by which the Bardic Corporation was meant, gravely relates that a Chief Bard recited poems before a prince, which were received with due reverence; then the prince observed that they were no doubt most admirable, if understood, and prayed the bard to explain, to which he graciously condescended. The tract is a pungent satire, and turned the bards into ridicule. The appearance of such a work is of high literary interest, showing, as it does, that Literature saw and knew itself, and could criticise its faults. The bards had already been excluded from the position of judges because their awards had been too technically obscure. They were now to suffer a disestablishment. In no country had the power of poets been so great nor their satire so dreaded; they had consequently become as a corporation so arrogant and oppressive that the

Chiefs of the Nation resolved to exile them. Saved by the sympathetic advocacy of St. Columba, a new arrangement was decided on. The Great Companionship was dissolved, and bards were allocated to the different principalities with generous appanages. This solution has always been applauded, but to me there seem grave drawbacks. If the tendency of an independent corporation was toward arrogance, the tendency now was towards subservience. The bards too often became court-poets, or laureates, each extolling his own chief and clann, as the Latin Eulogists in Gaul extolled their rulers. Hence a cause of sectional friction and a decadence of true poetry.

Fortunately other forces were at work. The instinctive spiritualism and aerial imaginative power of the race, the great thrill of Christianity vivifying souls, the enthusiasms of foreign wars, and the sacrificial ardour aroused in a chivalrous people by foreign oppression, made certain that decadence should be followed by renascence time after time. These forces distinguish the history and fate of Irish literature from that of others. Add to these the new energies acquired by the fusion of new arrivals with their predecessors, which gave fresh impulses to letters, such as Rome acquired by contributors from Gaul and Spain. This volume contains several contributions which illustrate this co-operation of men of different races : it furnishes evidence also that poetry in Erin was not confined to a class of professed bards, but permeated all classes so long as the Irish language was spoken. And now, once again, the country is quickened by a literary, lingual and musical renascence.

Externally, the influence of the Universities and Literature of Ireland on the emerging literatures of European nations, so far as verse is concerned at least, has been demonstrated in the Introduction, and not impeached. Directly or indirectly, the early literatures of Norway, Germany, France,

and Spain show in a less or greater degree signs of that influence. The composition of Latin hymns after Gaelic forms, and the power of the great schools which made Ireland, for at least three centuries, the University of a new-born Europe, could not fail of leaving an indelible impression.

That the early poetry of England and of Scotland should be influenced, likewise, was but natural and necessary. Some evidences of this are given in the Introduction and elsewhere, as, for instance, in connection with "The Pricke of Conscience," "The Land of Cockaigne," and Gawin Douglas's song, where the similarity of rime, rhythm, and alliteration is so remarkable. Drayton, declared the Irish Lyre to be "our music's mother."<sup>1</sup> Pope also paid generous tribute, and Johnson was interested in the subject of Irish literature, and pressed for the exploration of its manuscript records. In a reflected fashion, also, it can have produced an effect, as the *Athenæum*, in reviewing the First Edition, recognised: "It seems highly probable that the transformation of Celtic forms into Latin gave hints, not only to the troubadours, but to Saxon and High German writers like Aldhelm and Otfried, and thus indirectly was the precursor of much that is most melodious in our English verse."<sup>2</sup>

In the Introduction to the First Edition it was shown that a passage in Shakespear, which had baffled inquiry, was readily explained as a quotation from an Irish song. Every requisite condition was satisfied when "Tiucame" (or Tiucfame) was substituted for "Ducdame."<sup>3</sup> Evidently the poet had listened to some wandering Irish minstrel singing to his harp a song of the Gael, and the reiterated word dwelt on his ear.

Here is a striking and curious parallelism between a

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for this reference to the *Academy*.

<sup>2</sup> *Athenæum*, August 21, 1897.

<sup>3</sup> The *Athenæum* noted that Ireland thus afforded a mine of military slang, like that derived later from the occupation of the Highlands by English troops, and from India at the present day.



celebrated passage in "Macbeth" and one from an ancient Irish tract. It will be remembered, whilst the chronicle which is considered to have suggested the scene simply states that the foe advanced bearing branches, Shakespear gives us a dramatic presentation. Macbeth and a Messenger are put upon the scene, and an animated dialogue takes place as to the approach of a moving wood from Birnam. The Messenger asserts he has seen it move : Macbeth reviles him as a liar.

"MACBETH. Thou comest to use thy tongue, thy story quickly!  
 MESSENGER. Gracious, my lord,  
 I should report that which I say I saw,  
 But know not how to do it.  
 MACBETH. Well, say, sir.  
 MESSENGER. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,  
 I look'd toward Birnam, and anon me thought  
 The wood began to move.  
 MACBETH. Liar and slave !  
 MESSENGER. Let me endure your wrath if't be not so.  
 Within this three miles you may see it coming ;  
 I say a moving grove.  
 MACBETH. If thou speakest false  
 Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,  
 Till famine cling thee : if thy speech be sooth  
 I care not if thou dost for me as much."

In D'Avenant's version (1674) there is a different ending :

"MACBETH. If thou speakst False, I'll send thy Soul  
 To th'other World to meet with moving Woods  
 And walking Forrests."

The parallel passage to which I have referred is taken from "one of the most ancient of the class of Chivalrous Tales which are so numerous in ancient Irish Literature."<sup>4</sup> Here the Ultonian foes approach by night the fortress of Temair Luachra, in Kerry. Here again are two watchers, and here

<sup>4</sup> *Mescad Ulad*. Tr. by W. M. Hennessy. Todd Lecture Series, R.I.A., VI., 1889. I have substituted "grove" for "brake" in his version of the poem.

also they differ and dispute as to whether they are not threatened by the approach of a hostile army. Crom Deroil, one of the watchers, asks the other if he does not perceive spears and hosts advancing over the hill from the east. Crom Darail scoffs at the statement, asserting that the hosts are but oak-trees, and the spears but the antlers of stags. Then Crom Deroil reasons with and rebukes him in a short poem for mistaking men for groves or moving woods, thus :

“O Crom Darail, what seest thou through the fog,  
 On whom rests disrepute after the contest ?  
 'Tis not right to contend with me in every way ;  
 Thou sayst, O stooping man, they are slow-moving groves !  
 If they were groves, they would be still at rest,  
 They would not rise, unless alive, to depart.  
 If they were oaks of dark woods, o'er forests thick,  
 They would not move through devious ways, if they were dead.  
 As they are not dead, fierce their battle, fierce their hue,—  
 They traverse plains and woods also, for they are alive.  
 If they were trees of hill-tops, with hardy strength,  
 They would not wave such standards, speckled all—  
 As they are not trees, ugly their uproar—a fact undoubted—  
 Victorious men they, men with shields, their weapons great.”

The passage concludes finely :

“It was then the sun rose on the orb of the earth,  
 ‘Visible to us now is the host,’ said Crom Darail—  
 The sun rose over the slopes of Iv-Luachra.”

The enemy rushed in “as if the sea had come over the walls,” and all was terror.

The passage in Holinshed, on which the scene is supposedly founded, is meagre and not suggestive ; here, on the other hand, we find two watchers on the walls, disputing as to the approach of a foe, and here, in both cases, one watcher maintains that the alleged hosts are “slow-moving groves,” whilst his companion discredits the statement. Finally the enemy captures the fort in both instances. Is it too daring to



suppose that, at a time when his Queen learned to speak Irish and was charmed with Irish melodies,<sup>1</sup> Shakespear followed the example of Spenser, in the matter of Irish poems (and romances), and "caused divers of them to be translated unto" him, and found also that "surely they savoured of sweet wit and good invention"? If not, if he knew nothing of this dramatic presentation, then the coincidence in thought between Shakespear and an archaic Irish bard is marvellous, and should deepen our interest in a Literature which thus anticipated him in this matter.

A number of new versions will be found in this edition to illustrate different periods and exemplify different styles. The most ancient original is the poem of Torna Eigeas (fifth century) in which he describes his relations with the kings of Northern and Southern Erinn. He had been Chief Druid and their tutor, and in verse of classic form and refined reserve he defines his feelings towards them. Welcomed by both, he reviewed with Niall the trophies of his prowess, with Corc he shared the king's confidence. Niall he set at his right hand in esteem for his high intellect, and Corc at his left in order that he might be close to the heart which loved him. The construction, analytic power, and fine traits displayed in this poem supply evidence that when St. Patrick came to Erinn he came, as St. Paul to Athens, before a highly-cultured audience. For in this poem there is no trace of Christian influence, neither as regards authorship nor subsequent revision.

The second poem, "A Song for the Sea-Kings of Dublin," is one of unique interest. Mention was made in the Introduction of the cause and manner of its composition. It is, so far as I am aware, the first sea-song in Irish, or in any European language, and it is remarkable that it should have been the privilege of the Gael, who are supposed, erroneously, not to

<sup>1</sup> "Irish music is now most pleasing," at Court, 1602.—*Talbot Papers*.

be sea-lovers, to produce the first Song of the Sea. The suggestion came from the Norse-Irish, but the achievement belongs to the Gael. The bard shows remarkable command of his subject, vividly depicting the various moods and movements of the waters, in storm, in happy intervals of peace contrasted with sudden new tempests. There is vigour in the conception of the driving might of the Four Winds,—the East wind coming first, as in early Irish Christian work the Orient was the chief point,—and of the rousing of the Valour or Spirit of the Billows recoiling reluctantly before them. The wrath and wreckage of fierce seas are sung, and, between, this picture of placid peace heightens, and is heightened by the artistic contrast :—

“The high tide! the ocean wide!  
Sailing ships delighted glide!  
The glad winds gaily whirling,  
Race Inver’s ripples, twirling;  
Swift the prows long seas divide!”

The skill of the bard is manifested in the metre adopted, in the “*Láid Lúaseach*,” the swinging or rocking song, and is well fitted to suggest the motion of the sea.<sup>1</sup>

The third poem, which was also referred to in the Introduction to the First Edition, has since been edited, with a literal prose translation, by Prof. Kuno Meyer, to whom Ireland owes much for his sympathetic scholarship. This poem, entitled “King and Hermit,” is attributed to King Guaire’s brother, Marban, who forsook a royal position for a life in a woodland hermitage. The King, who loved him, remon-

<sup>1</sup> This poem, mentioned by O’Curry, as noted in the Introduction, and quoted by Thurneysen, *Irische Texte*, Vol. III., was exhumed and translated by Prof. Kuno Meyer, *Otia Merseiana*, Vol. II., 1900-1. It is stated that the version extant is of later date than the time of Rumann, but the original may have been modified in the course of transcription. The knowledge of the Norse customs of guerdon intimates a cotemporary knowledge. Again, the occurrence of place-names, long forgotten, indicates an archaic origin.

strated with him concerning the hardships he endured, but Marban replied in a marvellous vindication, in which the delights of his life amid the beauties of Nature are sung in simple, but sincere, and enthusiastic manner. Dr. Kuno Meyer rightly terms it "a singularly beautiful poem." It has curiously enough been preserved in only one copy, and that a late one. This was due to the importance attached to the more learned, expert, official, or court-poetry. Topographical and similar verse was preserved, he adds, whilst the genuine poetry,<sup>1</sup> such as found in this poem, was relegated to the margins and blank spaces of vellum manuscripts. An instance of this was given in the First Edition, where a monk of St. Gall pauses from his copying to write a couple of purely poetic stanzas to a blackbird.

Prof. Kuno Meyer, an unquestionable authority on the subject, adds: "It may be safely predicted that these anonymous and neglected poems, once properly collected and edited and translated, will strongly appeal to all lovers of poetry. There is in them such delicate art, so true and deep a note that, with exception of the masterpieces of Welsh poetry, I know nothing to put beside them."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is pleasant to find that, what I ventured to guess as a young student, has been more than justified. In the Introduction to the Second Series of Munster Poets, 1860, this passage occurs: "Although these more learned styles have been almost the sole kind transmitted to us through our ancient manuscripts, yet it appears to me that there may have been poems of easier flow and simpler measure—songs and ballads in fact—circulating among the people themselves. It is true that the bards recited before the chiefs and their clanna the lays of their heroism, or the chivalrous actions of Finn, and Ossian, and Oscar, the 'gold-deeded,' but had not the young men and maidens their own private loves and joys and sorrows to tell of between the many-columned green forest domes of Ancient Eunn? Had they not, therefore, emotions powerful enough to stir them to song?" Hermits also, it appears, and others besides, sang their unpremeditated and often unrecorded strains.

<sup>2</sup> "King and Hermit," being an Irish poem of the tenth century. Kuno Meyer, 1901. David Nutt, London. The translator assigns as the date of the transcript the early part of the tenth century.

Anticipating the poet who longed for "a lodge in some vast wilderness," Marban with serene sincerity says :

" In a Wood a lodge I own  
By none, save God, beholden :  
Here an Ash, a Hazel there  
By one great Oak enfolden."

From the roof-tree of his house, his lady-love sings to him—and his lady-love is a blackbird, singing from the tree-top ! Then after five verses in this metre, he lets his words flow in freer enthusiastic measure to describe the delight of the Woods, "Voluptas memorum," as his great countryman Sedulius called it. In this verse he anticipates Uhland and his gentle host :

" An Apple-tree, full-fruited, free,  
My Hostel stands,  
And nutty boughs bend toward the house  
For willing hands."

Another very natural and simple, though dramatic ballad, is given in "Eivleen a rúin," the archaic original, which supplied Shakespear with "Ducdame" and "A Hundred Thousand Welcomes," which line has gone round the world. The poet, Carrol O'Daly, if indeed it be the same, has shown in "Lover and Echo," an example of what the Irish could do in pleasant persiflage ; and, in making the last syllables such as Echo might by repeating make answer, he achieved a pretty piece of novelty. For this certainly is a very early, if not the earliest, example of Echo-rime of its kind. Piers Ferriter's dainty cavalier song, "Lay thine arms aside, Young Maid," illustrates a class of song which, though known in France and England, was not supposed to exist in Irish. It is an evidence, in addition to others, that Irish poetic literature includes many schools and styles, and is at home in all, not less in gay and delicate play of wit than in the deep strain of sorrow and the impassioned lay of heroism.

In conclusion, whilst this work has shown, among other things, that the different races who made Ireland their home contributed to create a national Anthology, its reception has demonstrated that other peoples can give a cordial and encouraging welcome to such Irish work. In the critical columns of English, Scottish, Welsh, and foreign periodicals, there has been ample evidence to this effect. One writer quoted Drayton (b. 1593, d. 1631), whose words are a generous recognition of the country's ancient repute :

" The Irish I admire  
And still cleave to that lyre  
As our music's mother,  
And think till I expire,  
Apollo's such another."

Pope possibly had these words in his mind when he wrote

" And Ireland, mother of sweet singers,  
Presents the harp still to his fingers."

No higher praise could well be given, unless it be found in the testimony of Edmund Spenser. So frequently have fragments of his " State of Ireland " been cited as hostile criticism, that it seemed well to place his tribute to the beauty of Irish verse, though imperfectly known to him, in the front of this volume. That the reputation of the ancient Free Nation, sometimes carped at, stood high in the days and mind of Spenser needs no other testimony than this, with which my preface may fitly end, seeing that it has dealt so much with the period he exalts :

" Whilome, when Ireland flourished in fame,  
Of wealth and goodnesse, far above the rest,  
Of all that bear the British Islands' name,  
The gods then used, for pleasure and for rest,  
Oit to resort thereto."



## INTRODUCTION





# Introduction



MAY not a buried literature have claims upon our attention? If it be of interest to delve and discover a statue or a city, long concealed, should it not be more attractive to come upon a kingdom, where long-forgotten peoples live, love, and act?

What a stir there would be, could some delver declare that he had, in his researches underground, discovered a lost literature of Gaul or of Germany, and in it the song, story, and music of nations speaking for themselves, whom now we know but by the description of alien foes. Such a treasure-trove is beyond hope. The Romans went over the regions they subjugated, like the sands of Sahara over meadows, destroying all that was of native growth. Of the Bards they preserved nothing but the name. From the Gauls they adopted articles of attire, their sculptors depicted the native warriors with torques and truis, but their men of letters saved nothing from the wreck of mental work. The term "barbarians" sufficed then as now to sway opinion. Let us, who are of their descendants, call them instead the "Free Nations," and remember that, however simple their customs, they

never committed deeds like those which deluged Rome with blood. Nor did they annihilate its literature.

It is impossible to suppose that these Free Nations had no lays or legends which could have been preserved, and it is equally impossible to believe that there was no diffusion of knowledge between the classic and the non-classic worlds. Their frontiers were not rigid and impassable. Six centuries before the Christian era, the Greeks founded a colony at what is now Marseilles, and were in contact with the Celts. A century later, Herodotus described their territory ; later still, Aristotle told of their manners and customs, and Pytheas made his voyage to Britain. They often went over the borders in war. Five times in the fourth century B.C. the Gauls invaded Italy. They conquered Rome, and settled in Liguria, Istria, etc., founding Milan and other civic centres. Manlius got his name "Torquatus" because he captured a torque or collar of gold from "a proud invader." The unresting Celts marched into Greece in the third century ; menaced Delphi, and made a settlement in Phrygian Galatia.<sup>1</sup> Then came the Roman outflow, when the *tumultus gallicus* was proclaimed, and Cisalpine Gaul conquered. The legions advanced against the transalpine Celts, and some fifty years before our era, Cæsar had formed the young Celtic chieftains into the Legion of the Lark, made them citizens of Rome, and admitted their magnates to the Senate.

Under such a policy there was hope that something of Celtic knowledge and culture might be saved, more especially as attention was given to the position and influence of the druids and bards. And now I come

<sup>1</sup> The Galatians still spoke Celtic in St. Jerome's time.

through a region of facts to a supposition which may seem bold, though it is simply that some of the bardic work was noted and preserved. We know with what interest Cæsar's fortunes in Gaul were followed by Cicero. Philosopher as well as orator, Cicero studied the religious rites of the Celtic druids. This he could do at first hand, for he was personally acquainted in Rome with the Chief Druid of the Aedui, Divitiacus,<sup>1</sup> whom he esteemed. Now as Cicero the philosopher studied druid rites, is it not probable that Cicero the poet studied bardic methods?<sup>2</sup> His opportunity was at hand, in the person of an intelligent expert; and his inquiring mind was not likely to stop short when there was question of exploring a new system of verse-structure. Why should not he, anticipating Spenser, have caused divers Celtic poems to be translated for him? Lastly, I venture to suggest, temerarious though the suggestion be, that Cicero not only studied a specimen of Celtic verse, but imitated it. The evidence which I adduce in support of this view may be found in those much-abused lines which pained Quintilian and scandalise Cicero's admirers:

“Cedant arma togæ, concedat laurea linguæ,  
O fortunatum natam me consule Romam.”

These verses, in the eyes of some critics, brand Cicero as a poetaster. But they should have remembered that a man of his genius, and a true poet, might compose such

<sup>1</sup> Probably the Latinised form of Dubhtac (Duvtac).

<sup>2</sup> Cicero (after the forum) and young Cæsar studied under the Gaul Gniphō, a grammarian and rhetor (B.C. 88); they heard the great actor Roscius, a Gaul, and Cicero regretted that he had been too young to hear the Gaul L. Plotius, the earliest teacher of rhetoric in Rome.

lines as an experiment in verse-structure. Let us suppose, for a moment, that they were written in imitation of Celtic verse, and that this verse was identical in form with an ancient Irish quatrain. Then we arrange the lines thus :

“Cedant arma togæ  
 Concedat laurea linguæ :  
 O fortunatum *natam*  
 Me consule *Romam.*”

Now, if we test this by the strict laws of an ancient Gaelic quatrain, it amazes one to find that the Latin verse fulfils certain requirements. (1.) It is composed of a leading and of a closing couplet (the sense, which may be complete in each couplet, must be complete in the quatrain). (2.) The end-words rime by their vowels; the rime being monosyllabic in the first couplet, and dissyllabic in the second. [If we adopt the reading “laudi” instead of “linguæ,” then the rime becomes dissyllabic in the first couplet also; as “laudi” is in true asonance with “togæ.”] (3.) Two words in some lines should begin by vowels, or by the same consonant. This alliteration is perfect in the second line, and is secured in the third, by the repetition of the letter “n.” Its apparent (but permissible) absence in the first and last lines makes the matter more curious still, because we get class-correspondence in its stead; for the initials *c* and *t* in the first line, and *m* and *r* (*rr*), in the last, obey the Gaelic law of correspondence.

Are these remarkable similarities of structure nothing but a chance coincidence? If so, my theory that Cicero made an experiment in verse-structure on a Celtic model

vanishes,—leaving in its place, however, the greater difficulty of explaining how so complex a coincidence could occur, and how so skilled a word-workman, and so eminent a poet, could prove so inexpert. His lines have provoked ridicule ; they would command interest, perhaps admiration, if his purpose were as the theory suggests it may have been. As in the fossiliferous rock we find moulded the delicate form of a plant, whose substance has long disappeared, we should then discover the graces of a verse of vanished Gallic, petrified in a lasting Latin mould.

Whatever hope, if any, there was for a development amongst the Romans of an intellectual interest in Celtic life and literature was extinguished by the policy of Augustus ; Rome, dominating men and minds, latinised Gaul, advanced her eagles into Britain, and confronted the Celts in their last strongholds. Ireland, then in her heroic age, fomented, fostered, and kept up immortal hostility against the common foe ; and, in alliance with the Caledonians and independent Britons, shook the invader's power. Claudian, in his praise of Stilicho, declares the fact. Possibly Roman persistence and discipline would have at last prevailed, had not the outburst of the turbulent Teuton tribes saved the Celts.

It was fortunate, indeed, that one island on the western verge of Europe escaped the Roman eagles. Agricola, while in Britain, often thought of crossing the Irish Sea with his forces, so that Rome might dominate all, and Liberty be put quite out of sight. Had he gone, Ireland also would have seen her mental independence and all its fruits submerged. As it is, we have, in her

ancient literature, the noblest monument which witnesses to the intellect of the Ultra-Roman world. Ireland is thus in letters, as once in arms, the champion of the Free Nations.

Hence, the interest which attaches to the literature of Ireland is manifold. It does not only reveal the inner natures of the inhabitants of the island at different epochs, before the coming of the Christian faith, during its progress, and since, but it also enables us to gain some glimpse into the homes of other nations—Teutons as well as Celts—whose lamps were extinguished.

Unhappily for history, that literature was long buried in neglect. Then, for a time, it lay locked in an archaic language, like some splendid missal, clasped in covers of wrought silver which could not be opened. For years, however, the keen and capable minds of scholars, in Germany, France, Italy, Britain, and Ireland, have been at work, and have rendered into the modern languages the contents of many most ancient and interesting documents. Now, at last, these are accessible—though sometimes not readily, for they must often be sought for in the pages of foreign periodicals.

One department of Irish literature possesses special and singular interest. This is the section of poetry.

The creation of a system of verse-structure, absolutely independent of that of Greece and Rome, was an achievement which must command increasing attention as it grows better known. It is indeed difficult to be familiar with it, so elaborate did that system become. The introduction and use of rime as an art-method constitute an epoch in the history of European literature. The importance of the innovation becomes greater the more we consider the



mastery exhibited, and the very subtle and refined modes invented for producing desired effects. It is impossible here to do more than to make allusion to this subject, for it would require a treatise to deal with it in an adequate manner.

We know what ingenuity the ancient Irish displayed in their ornaments of gold and silver, which command the admiration of all workers in the precious metals, as well as of all artists. Those who have seen the illuminated initials of the "Book of Kells," know the wonderful grace of form shown in the interwoven lines, and the exquisite taste displayed in the tints which still freshly adorn them. A similar ingenuity, grace, artistic power, delicacy, and taste, were employed in the service of poetry.

No translator can hope to reproduce, in English, the finer traits of this art, because these demand a language of open vowels, and other aids. This fact must be remembered, for it gave the advantage of subtle and elusive rime, without tiring the ear. But though such refined graces must be sought for in the originals, something may be done to represent the form, style, and methods of the bards, whilst keeping faithful to the spirit and substance of their lays.

With this view the accompanying collection has been made. It does not, of course, represent all diversities of verse-forms, but it does reproduce some which will be novel. Those who are wont to associate Irish poetry with effusiveness of thought and luxuriance of language will be surprised to find that bardic poetry was characterised by classic reserve in thought, form, and expression. This, perhaps, is not the least message of the ancient bards to their successors.

The poems have been placed in chronological order so far as may be. This is done tentatively in the case of the earlier lays, for their date is uncertain, though ancient.

I. The series begins by the strange incantation attributed to Amergin, the poet-druid of those southern invaders of Ireland known as Milesians. In structure the verse is peculiar, the most striking feature being the riming of the last word of each line with the first word of the succeeding line. This rime is often complete : sometimes only the vowels rime. There is alliteration, also ; two words in each line begin either by vowels or by the same consonants. Conaclon is the name given to this form of verse, which has been occasionally imitated in later days. Usually, however, later bards chose rather to make the last word of the stanza rime with the first of a succeeding stanza. It was very usual to unite the first and last word of an entire poem by a link of rime.

Conaclon rime, such as Amergin's, would necessarily be rare in literature. In modern times we have the poem of Marc de Papillon, Sieur de Lasphrise (A.D. 1597), who vaunts it as his own invention. He wrote :

“ Fallait-il que le ciel me rendit amoureux  
Amoureux, jouissant d'une beauté craintive,  
Craintive à recevoir la douceur excessive  
Excessive,” etc.

In this case, indeed, the rime is obtained by repeating the word in a somewhat different sense ; but, curiously enough, in this he caught the method sometimes used by

Amergin. Conaclon is also represented by the "rime annexée" of Clement Marot, *e.g.* :

"Dieu gard ma maitresse et *regente*  
Gente de corps et de façon!"

Samuel Lover, in his "Fairy Child," makes interrupted use of this iteration. In mediæval Latin verse, which must have been largely manipulated by Irish monks, and which influenced the poetry of the new languages, we find some forms which recall conaclon. Thus, in *versus immediati*, the last syllables of one line rime with the first of the next :

"Si fugias obscoenas      poenas ternas baratorum  
Quorum pressuræ      duræ fuerunt nihi curæ."

If we divide the verses, as here indicated, the resemblance becomes still greater.

The "Triumph Song of Amergin" is remarkable in that, for the most part, it appears not only to dispense with rime, but to reject it. This is the "Rosg," which consists of short impetuous sentences, rhythmical though unrimed, designed to express or to stir up vehement enthusiasm. It was not seldom used, in the elder epoch, in framing war-odes.

This is, in fact, the earliest example of blank verse—which is supposed to be a modern invention. It is exceedingly remarkable that blank verse should have been invented by a people to whom the introduction of rime is peculiarly due.

Still, though the short lines end as blank verse ends, there is, I believe, rime of a kind here intended by the bard, though it has escaped notice. The first words of

the short verses are identical : in the translation "I," in the original "Am" (I am). This constitutes what I would call "Entrance-rime" to distinguish it from "End-rime." That it is intended to impress the ear I infer from the fact that where it is absent, in the longer lines, alliterative-rime is often introduced. This entrance-rime has been used by moderns without special rime-intention, as a rhetoric mode. Thus, in Sabine's apostrophe to her native town :

"Albe, où j'ai commencé de respirer le jour,  
Albe, mon cher pays et mon premier amour," etc.

Again, in Camille's striking invective :

"Rome, unique objet de mon ressentiment,  
Rome, à qui vient ton bras d'immoler mon amant,  
Rome, qui t'a vu naître et que ton cœur adore,  
Rome, enfin que je hais parcequ'elle t'honore."

The first Elegy ascribed to the nephew of Miled (or Milesius), archaic in form, possesses alliteration and rime, both asonant and consonant, in an elaborated manner.

II. We come next, over a wide time-chasm, to the Cuchulainn<sup>1</sup> Period. From intrinsic evidence its literature must be relegated to the pre-Christian ages ; its spirit is as pagan as that of the Iliad, and pervades it so entirely that no scribe thought of altering it, save, perhaps, by the addition of a Christian tag. It is, indeed, one of the highest honours of Irish monasticism that, though ascetic and zealous in the extreme, it had a liberal large-minded respect for the literature of the ancients, and preserved it.

<sup>1</sup> Pr. Cuhulainn.

The Cuchulainn Age is represented here by poems taken from some memorable historic tales or romances. The first is "The Sick-bed of Cuchulainn and the only Jealousy of Emer." Here the hero is shown in commerce and communion with the spirit world. The second is the famous "Táin Bo Cuailgné," or Cattle-Spoil of Cuailgné," where untoward Fate (in the person of Queen Mave) compels him, as Champion of Ulster, to fight and slay his friend Ferdiaid. With this is given, from the Battle of Ros-na-ree, a dialogue-poem between Queen Mave and her Envoys. Lastly come three lays from "The Fate of the Children of Usnach," in order to show the metric form of the originals.

The perfection and diversity of the verse-forms, in this period, come on us with sudden surprise, as if the Gaelic muse had sprung into new being, fully equipped; but this seems due to the fact that an intermediate developmental period has irrevocably disappeared. Fand's "Welcome to Cuchulainn" supplies examples of alliteration and of end-rimes:

" Stately stands the charioteer,  
Beardless, young, who hasteth here;  
Splendid o'er the plain he speeds  
His careering chariot-steeds."

Lest it should grow monotonous, double rimes are introduced, though sparingly:

" At sight of those steeds, fleeing,  
I stand there, silent, seeing;  
Never hoofs like these shall ring  
Rapid as the winds of Spring."

The concluding stanza presents another change, displaying internal or inlaid rime :

“Blood drips from his lofty *lance*.  
 In his *g*lance *g*leams battle fire ;  
**H**aughty, high, the victor *g*oes,  
**W**oe to those who *w*ake his ire.”

Then follows Liban's irregular “Rosg,” which, in its burthen, or short “wheel” followed by a longer burthen, anticipates forms which made no appearance in English until the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

There is also onomatopœia in the Gaelic lines, describing how Cuchulainn's wheels are more resonant than the entire chariot of another.

The “internal rime,” shown in the last verse, was introduced afterwards into Norse by the Irish-Icelandic poets. It is the progenitor, also, of the so-called “inverse rime” in English ; this becomes clear if we make a couplet of the line in which it appears :

“Gave him great *aid*  
 And *made* him more inclined.”  
 Spenser, “Faërie Queene.”

Again :

“She must lie *here*  
 On *mere* necessity.”—  
 Shakespeare, “Love's Labour's Lost.”

Fand's “Farewell to Cuchulainn,” coming from one who rejoiced to see him red with the blood of battle, surprises one by its great tenderness and refinement, as well as by its nobility of thought.

It is the first Love-Song of Erin, and touches chords that will vibrate in the human heart till mankind is no

more. Deirdré's plaints are more objective, Fand's more subjective ; her grief is implied and suggested rather than directly expressed.

Cuchulainn's lament for the friend who had proved false to their friendship is a noticeable poem in a noble episode. Each stanza begins with the same two lines, so that the burthen (of late date in English) was invented and used very early by the Irish bards. Cuchulainn declares that his combats with previous champions had been play and pleasure to him until Ferdiad came. The poem ends thus :

*“ Play was each, pleasure each,  
Till Ferdiad faced the beach ;  
Loved Ferdiad, dear to me  
I shall dree his death for aye ;  
Yesterday, a Mountain he,  
But a Shade to-day.”*

The iteration and return displayed in this poem came into other literatures at a late period. It anticipates also the “broken stave” of Marot, and of English poets of the sixteenth century.

To another form of verse-structure, found, not in one but in several of the poems which intersperse the “*Táin Bo*,” a special interest belongs. A specimen is given in “*The Queen's Envoys*,” taken from the “*Battle of Ros-na-ree*.” It consists of two or of three lines ending in dissyllabic rimes, followed by a shorter line with single rime.<sup>1</sup> In the first case, it anticipates the structure of Moore's “*Go where Glory waits thee*,” in the second of the “*Groves of Blarney*” and “*The Bells of Shandon*.”

<sup>1</sup> These forms were imitated in mediæval hymns, *e.g.*, by Adam of St. Victor, a “*Briton*.” The form, where two long



The latter is the more usual form, and is found in the following :

“Here, if come **K**ing **C**onnor  
**B**ack shall turn his **b**anner  
**L**ow shall lie his honour,  
**V**anquished shall he **b**e.”

Guest, observing on the difficulty of ascertaining the origin of English metres belonging to triple measure, says he has seen none of earlier date than the fifteenth century. He gives some verses which Gawin Douglas mentioned as popular amongst the people in 1512. These I quote in order to show that they are identical in rime-arrangement with the ancient Irish verses ; and (what should set the origin of their structure beyond all cavil) they also present alliteration, according to the strict rule of the Gaelic bards. This, which escaped Guest's notice, I have marked :

“Hay, now the **d**ay **d**awis  
The jollie **c**ock **c**rawis,  
Now shroud is the **s**hauis  
Throw **n**ature **a**none ;  
The thrissel **c**ok **c**ryis  
On **l**overs **w**ha **l**yis,  
Now skail is the **s**kyis,  
The **n**ight is **n**eir gone.”

This must have been framed on a Gaelic model, as lines ending with dissyllabic rimes are followed by a shorter line with monosyllabic rime is represented in the “Stabat Mater,” *e.g.* :

“Stabat Mater dolorosa  
Juxta crucem lachrymosa,  
Dum pendebat filius.”

Here the influence of Irish metric is distinctly shown.

every peculiarity is reproduced. It is even more exact in observing the rule of alliteration than some Gaelic verses. Anyone can verify this identity of structure by glancing at the following verses from a dialogue poem in the "Táin":

"Ni ragsa gan rata  
 Do cluci na h-ata  
**M**eraid colla **m**-brata  
 Go **m**-brut is co **m**-brig  
 Noco geb ge esti  
 Ge ra bet dom rescí<sup>1</sup>  
 Gan grein ocas escí<sup>1</sup>  
 La muir ocas tír."

The Irish, in this very ancient poem, presents consonant as well as asonant rime, or what I may call bisonant rime, which, unfortunately, is, generally speaking, the only kind perceived by the defective modern ear.

King James V. of Scotland, a critic of poetry, gave the name of "cuttit or broken" to all staves containing lines of unequal length. Guest, who quotes this, says the "broken stave," as he defines it, made its appearance in English about the middle of the sixteenth century, having been borrowed from the continent. Frenchmen, Italians, and Spaniards, in this century, varied the monotony of their chansons and ballades by shortening certain lines. The finished culture of the ancient Irish is shown by their invention of this, as well as of other metres, a thousand years previously.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C (hard) corresponds in class with t. I have omitted dots over certain letters.

<sup>2</sup> With this method of surprise to prevent monotony in verse I would correlate the characteristic "gapp'd scale" of Irish music, by which a similar effect was produced in ancient Irish melodies.

Some examples are before the reader. Another will be found in Deirdré's touching "Farewell to Alba," and several others follow. The old historic romance of which she is the heroine contains a number of lays, and these differ in structure. Besides the specimens given in this volume, we have her "Lament for the Sons of Usnach," the spirit of which has been so admirably transfused in Sir Samuel Ferguson's version. The original, however, is peculiarly elaborate. Each line ends with a double rime. The double end-rime of the first line chimes with an internal double-rime within the second; the same system holds good for the third and fourth lines. Then the double end-rime of the second line is answered by the double end-rime of the fourth.<sup>1</sup>

This will be more readily understood by an example in verse :

"Long is my day of sorrow—  
A morrow brings them never :  
Comrades of golden glory  
Whose story lives for ever."

It would be impossible to give a metrical version exactly faithful to the poet's metre, sense, and rime-system. But, later on, the reader will find an exact translation, of Caitlé's "Isle of Arann," in alternate double rime ; and here, another Lament for the Sons of Usnach, which Deirdré is supposed to sing, "Wail for

<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that even in modern times double-rime endings are much more common in popular Irish verse than in English. Some writers have criticised Moore on this ground : they failed to see that he was true to ancient forms, as necessarily happened when he cast his verse in the ancient music-mould.

the Warriors." It is specially remarkable, since, with alliteration, single and double rimes, and the broken stave, it presents an example of those sudden transitions from one measure to another, to suit the sense, which were especially effective and dramatic. This variation was a favourite with the ancient Irish, though it came but lately into the literature of other European nations.

III. Following the epoch of Cuchulainn comes the epoch of Fionn,<sup>1</sup> which is usually known as the Ossianic Period. For convenience I subdivide the latter into (*a*) the period of Fionn, when the Leader yet lived and the Great Companionship of the Fianna stood together, and (*b*) the Ossianic period, or the Age of Lamentation, when Ossian<sup>2</sup> sings their departed glory.

It is believed that the Fianna, a disciplined standing army, was organised in imitation and in defiance of the Roman legions. Considering with what valour and success the ancient Irish fought the latter in Caledonia and Britain, we must credit them with skill in arms. The references to battles with the Romans which appear in the Ossianic lays represent a core of old tradition or old verse, for unfortunately the lays have been often retouched by later bards. This they did for the dramatic purpose of setting Paganism and Christianity face to face, confronting them in the persons of Ossian and Patrick. With this view, they interpolated passages. Yet, if the names were omitted, the idea would not depart far from historic truth, for some knowledge of the new Faith had certainly reached the restless Gael, from Britain and Gaul, before the days of Patrick or of Palladius. And

<sup>1</sup> Find or Finn is the archaic form.

<sup>2</sup> Oisín is the correct form.

some of the poems, judged by their archaic tone of thought, loftier atmosphere, and classic reserve, appear to have remained untouched.

The poetic era of Fionn opens by a strange little lay given in a prose narrative of undoubted antiquity, entitled "The Boyish Exploits of Finn Son of Cumal." The verses are cited as the first lay of the Chief, whilst yet a youth, and they are consistently simple in structure, with occasional alliteration and rime. They present, however, a fair picture of sunny summer. In their subject, as in its treatment, they remind one of the early English verses (A.D. 1250-1260) on the approach of summer. To the student of literature, and not less to students of history and of biology, it must be interesting to compare two poems on the same topic, composed in these islands at a distance in time of possibly a thousand years. Here, therefore, I give the early English verses, not inquiring whether or not they were suggested by the more ancient Irish poem :

"Sumer is i-cumen in  
Llude sing cuccu :  
Groweth sed and bloweth med  
And springth the wde nu,  
Sing cuccu, cuccu.

Awe bleteth after lomb  
Llouth after calve cu ;  
Bullock sterteth, bucke verteth,  
Murie sing cuccu,  
Wel singes thu cuccu,  
Ne swik thou nauer nu  
Sing cuccu, cuccu."

Archaic also in thought and expression, but more matured in form is Fionn's staccato description of the

approach of winter. Could any poet in eight lines condense a more complete description, or produce a more chilling effect?

In "A Warrior's Duty" we have one of several ancient poems, in which the ethics of the ancient pagan Irish were set forth. Others are Cormac Mac Art's "Institutes of a King," and Cuchulainn's instructions to a prince. They teach the same lesson of loyalty, faithful companionship, knightly courtesy, sobriety of bearing, and kindness to the weak.

The intense appreciation of Nature, revealed in Amergin's Chant extends, like a woof of gold, from the earliest to the latest Irish poem. Nowhere else is found a love so tender, so passionate at times, so constant, and so enduring. It is more than an affection, in some cases it almost seems a fusion.

In this period the larger and deeper human note is sounded, with increasing intensity. First struck in Lugai's Elegy, it becomes clearer and fuller as the ages pass. The chord of noble friendship vibrates. In no place nor time was loyal companionship more highly honoured, or its cleavage more keenly felt. This powerful sentiment gives their graver interest and pathos to the heroic and romantic tales—with which the Irish bards were the first to endow Europe. This is the tragic element in the "Táin Bo." It does not stand alone, but underlies other tales such as the "Fate of the Children of Usnach" and the "Pursuit of Diarmid." There woman's love appears in the persons of Deirdré and of Gráinné,—in the former guarding, in the latter breaking, the beloved companionship, which forms in both cases the dramatic background.

Such loyal comradeship was known among other nations, such as the Greeks, but the ancient Irish possessed in addition what the Greeks did not possess, a high chivalrous love of woman. For woman with the Irish was man's equal in position, in estate, in power, and in friendship.

To the ancient Irish Europe owes its earliest love songs, and its first prose romances. Examples of the former have been given, for the Cuchulainn Period in the songs of Fand and of Deirdré. Here may be found the poem of a lover to his lady, Crédé—a chieftainess whose favour was sought by many, but whose coquetry was great as her beauty was admirable. Her suitor, Cael, approaches her with a poem of praise. In structure the poem is seven-syllabled (even when the rime is double) with end-rimes and alliteration. I quote the last stanza given, when, having eulogized her mansion and herself, her suitor says :

“ If she grant me grace at all—  
 She for whom the cuckoos call—  
 Then I, for thanks, will give her  
 More lays to live for ever.”

Is it not surprising how the thought, in this verse of an ancient Irish Bard whose words are exactly rendered, anticipates that so nobly expressed by the Marquis of Montrose, in the seventeenth century ?

“ But if thou wilt prove faithful then  
 And constant of thy word,  
 I'll make thee glorious by my pen,  
 And famous by my sword.”



But there is a line in the Irish which incloses a subtle and exquisite compliment. Who is she for whom the cuckoos call? Is it not the youthful Summer? So, when Cr  d   appears, the cuckoos call at her coming as at the coming of young Summer! This is surely one of the most beautiful compliments ever paid to woman.

Successful in his suit, Cael fell in desperate combat on the sea-shore with an invader, and the billows broke over them. In this case we have the earliest European expression of reciprocal love. Cael declared his devotion for Cr  d  , in her splendid mansion; Cr  d   reveals the intensity of her affection, besides the incarnadined sea. In structural form her Lament recalls that of some verses of Deirdr  's "Farewell to Alba." Whilst the remaining lines of the stanza are of seven syllables, the first line is short, having but three. Later copyists, not understanding this metre, eked out the first line, in such cases, by repeating the words with an exclamation between.<sup>1</sup> But though this may have adapted the stanzas to music, they lose the higher grace of classic firmness. They possess alliteration usually, with internal and end-rimes.

"Woe is me!  
 Dead my Cael is fair and free;  
 Oft my arms would ward his *sleep*,  
 Now it is the *deep* dark sea."

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<sup>1</sup> Thus the first line of the version would read, "Woe is me ! O woe is me." This form, traditionally sung, influenced Burns in "The Kirk's Alarms," where every first line contains a repetition, as "Orthodox ! Orthodox !"

Sometimes variety is produced by dissyllabic rimes :

“ Ever *raining*  
 Fall the *plaining* waves above ;  
 I have hope of joy no *more*  
 Since 'tis *o'er* our bond of love.”

Crédé associates nature with her grief. She hears not only the wailing waves, but notes the heron defending its young, the stag sobbing for the slain hind, the thrush and blackbirds' lament, and the swan mourning her dead mate. Then, with a sudden, and highly poetic reflection, she gauges the force of that grief that makes her (a princess, once so given to the joy of life) take share of sorrow with a dying swan.

Another lay, whose subject refers it to this epoch is “The Cold Night of Innisfail.”

“ Cold, cold,  
 Chill this night is Lurc's wide wold  
 Foodless now the gaunt deer goes,  
 High o'er hills the *snows* are rolled.”

Keats has told us that “the owl for all its feathers was a-cold.” But this fine image is surpassed, if not by that which shows the wren unable to shelter in its close nest, at least by the picture of the old eagle shivering in expectation that the bitter wind will freeze its beak in ice.

Of a different character, bright, buoyant, and witty is the poem : “Where is sweetest music ?” Here the individual characteristics of the chiefs of the great Companionship of the Fianna are reproduced.

IV. The death of Finn, and the disruption of the

Great Companionship, so pathetically told in the "Discourse of the Ancients"<sup>1</sup> brings us to the second section of this period, with which the name of Ossian must be associated. This is the Age of Lamentation. The Hebrews felt not more keenly the fall of Jerusalem, than the ancient bards the fall of Finn and the disbandment of the Fianna. In modern days there is nothing to parallel the sentiment save that which racked the Scottish Jacobites after Culloden, or rather that which wrung the hearts of his Old Guard on the downfall and death of Napoleon. National sorrow refines and induces national song. But neither the Jacobite Laments nor Béranger's strains can be taken as surpassing those ascribed to Ossian, in nobility of thought, refinement of feeling, or pathetic suggestiveness.

Look on that picture of "Ossian after the Fianna," a phrase which became the synonym of all survivors' sorrow. The days and nights drag wearily, hopelessly on, whilst he recalls the splendid fellowship of the past. Now, blinded by tears, broken by age, he has no fellowship but with grief:

"No hero now where heroes hurled,—  
 Long this night the clouds delay—  
 No man like me, in all the world  
 Alone with grief, and gray.

"Long this night the clouds delay—  
 I raise their grave-carn, stone on stone,  
 For Finn and Fianna passed away—  
 I, Ossian, left alone."

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<sup>1</sup> Silva Gadelica : with translations by Standish Hayes O Grady.

What poetry, also, in that conception of the Blackbird whose voice was still singing from its nest in the oak tree of Darricarn, long after the mighty hand of Finn, who placed it there, had turned to dust. Every note recalled the days of old to Ossian and to the Ancient Isle. What dignity also, and what reserve in the classic poem on the "House of Finn." *Vidi tantum!*

With these may be taken his warrior-comrade, Cailté's poem on winter. He strikes a bold chord, and brings us amongst the snowy mountains, where wolves are heard. The stag leaps up and bells aloud to warn its kindred. Then another stag, "arousing, Hears wail of wolves carousing." Cailté had "heard the chimes at midnight," with other mind than Falstaff. With Oscar and Diarmid, he heard "the rousing wolves a-wailing." In the winter of the year, and in the winter of his life the memory of his deeds gives him cheer.

"I am aged now and gray,  
Few of Men I meet this day :  
But I hurled the javelin bold,  
Of a morning, icy cold.

"Thanks unto the King of Heaven,  
And the Virgin's son be given :  
Many men have I made still  
Who this night are very chill."

The baptismal sprinkle given to the last quatrain adds force by contrast with the cause of the thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup> One might imagine that a pagan divinity had been dis-

<sup>1</sup> In this, the second edition, a classic pagan poem is given, untouched though preserved by Christian influence. It is the "Lament for Two Kings," by Torna the Learned.

placed from the first two lines : yet, as it stands, *Cailté* only anticipated some modern monarchs.

*Cailté's* poem on *Arann isle* displays the characteristic love of nature, whilst the verse-structure, having alternate dissyllabic rimes, is remarkable :

“ Arran, in deer delighting !  
Ocean smiles on her shoulders ;  
Men have feasts there and fighting  
Blue darts redden mid boulders.”

V. It has not hitherto been observed that a great catastrophe may influence the character of a whole nation. Yet, I would attribute the pathetic strain in Scottish poetry largely to the cruel consequences of the Jacobite defeat. Burns drew in new life from the fresh enthusiasms of the French Revolution, and so his poetry is more buoyant. There can be no doubt, I believe, that the sad dirges of *Ossian*—continued as the note was by other bards and generally spread—did influence the character and sentiment of the Gael, and probably infused that tone of melancholy which, renewed from time to time by recurring disasters, is supposed to be an essentially Celtic peculiarity.

Fortunately, there was a burst of sunshine when the Christian faith came forth upon the waters. Otherwise the refinement which sorrow produces might have been carried to enervation. Fortunately, also, St. Patrick chose the Irish, and not the Latin, as the language of his famous hymn “*The Guardsman's Cry*.”<sup>1</sup> This was a fruitful fact ; for whilst the Latin hymns by Irishmen (with the illustrious exception of the works of *Sedulius*) are of secondary, the Irish hymns are of primary interest

<sup>1</sup> Also known as “*The Deer's Cry*.”

and importance. They are the children of "The Guardsman's Cry."

St. Patrick gave his Confession in Latin, and might perhaps have given us rimed Latin verse.<sup>1</sup> He composed some lines in Irish regular verse. But for "The Guardsman's Cry," which is his authentic work, he chose that peculiar impetuous form known as the "Rosg," so often used as an incitement to warfare. No choice could have been more admirable. He pours through it all the ardent passion of his vehement spirit, and we see it swell and fall, pulsating with the life of faith, appealing, imploring, defiant, and confident. Clarence Mangan has paraphrased the original in a beautiful but diffuse ode. Here an effort is made to represent the original exactly in English, as what it is, an intense impassioned prayer.

As it was the first hymn composed in a European language beyond the classic world, the Hymn of St. Patrick makes an era in literature.

This was the Dawn-light of Christianity. There are many pieces in prose and verse which reflect the condition of things then prevailing. They present the elder beliefs in all their plenitude, and yet are given a Christian touch or colour. Some of them may have been composed before Christianity came, and been subsequently revised, as the Ancient Laws were revised; but it must be said that the Irish Christians respected the

<sup>1</sup> See hymn ascribed to him (but falsely, I think) in Cotton MSS. :

"Constet quantus honos humanæ conditionis  
Scire volens, hujus serie videat rationis,  
Non hominem verbo solo Deus effugiavit  
Quem facturus erat, sic quomodo cuncta creavit," etc.

pagan classics. They may, indeed, have been composed in two lights. As a pale wan moon is sometimes seen in the sky when the sun is shining, so the dim light of paganism lingered long after Christianity sent its rays over the island. Even Christians retained belief in the activity of Powers which they no longer worshipped.

These Twilight-pieces have many attractions. One is "The Fate of the Children of Lir." Transformed by the maleficence of their stepmother, the Swan-Children were doomed to suffer until Christianity should come to set them free. There is tender pathos in this tale, displayed in many of the poems. An *antithetical* treatment will be noticed in Fionnuala's "Lamentation on the Moyle," which style is also observable in Bran's "Voyage to the Isle of Delight." As regards structure, the most remarkable thing is the appearance of trisyllabic rimes—which make a very late appearance in English and other literatures. These triple rimes are sometimes secured by single words, sometimes by more words than one.

One quatrain may be cited where triple alternate with double rimes :—

"Dark our doom and tragical—  
 Condemned the waves to wander ;  
 Ne'er such ill-fate magical  
 Did mortal yet fall under."

The "Isle of Delight" follows. Here, again, we seem to have the new Christian belief grafted on the elder heathen : and the beauties and delights of the ancient pagan paradise combined with Christian hopes. Christianity came, as in Greece and Italy, to a civilised



and cultured people. This poem bears witness to the Ariel imagination of the ancients, which flew so easily from the visible to the invisible. Next to the episode of Fand, it is probably the earliest of those visionary pieces which the Irish precursors of Dante produced in successive ages, usually in prose, and which, when translated, became universally popular over Europe.

Some passages have a special charm, and offer a certain modernity of thought and expression :

“’Tis the beauty of things bright,—  
Loveliness is in its sight.”

And again :

“They have music in the night,  
Through the Isle of all Delight—  
Flash of Beauty’s diadem !”

Lovers of sports will find a novel suggestion in the mention of races between chariots and barques. These, however, took place in a region where time could be accurately kept as the boats sailed along the surface of the sea, whilst the chariots ran on the enchanting isle beneath them. Bran went forth over the sea to discover the delectable island, and was met by Manannan, the Ocean-Spirit, in his chariot. The bard, by a fine conception, makes Manannan the author of a lay which, antithetically, contrasts the faculties of the Mortal with those of the Immortal :

“The sea is clear,—  
So thinks Bran, when sailing here ;

I, in car, with purer powers  
Know the happy Plain of Flowers."¹

The bard changes his metre occasionally to prevent monotony, and to arouse attention.

VI. For three centuries, from the fifth to the ninth, the civilization of Europe belonged to Ireland, says a German historian. This evidence of intellectual culture and supremacy, the greatest glory of the country, is strangely ignored in its schools. The influence of the ancient Irish on the Continent began in the works of Sedulius, whose "Carmen Paschale," published in the fifth century, is the first great Christian Epic worthy of the name. Though he adopted the Latin forms of verse, he infused into them certain characters which reveal the Gael. One of these is the vowel end-rime, another systematic alliteration. These, of course, could not be continuously employed; but, on the other hand, they could not accidentally occur. A few examples may suffice for our present purpose. Consider these lines:

"Neve quis ignoret speciem crucis esse *colendam*,  
Quæ Dominum portavit *ovans*, ratione *potenti*,  
Quatuor inde plagas *quadrati* colligit *orbis*,  
Splendidus auctoris de vertice fulget *Æois*,  
Occiduo sacræ lambuntur sidere *plantæ*  
Arcton dextra tenet, medium læva erigit *axem*."

The rime in the end-words of the first two lines is "en," where the slender vowel "e" serves; in the second two lines the broad vowel "o," and in the last

¹ Some who depreciate the ancient Gaelic Literature suffer like Bran, from a lack of the finer vision.

two the broad vowel "a" give the Gaelic asonance. The systematic alliteration is obvious, and correctly complies with the Irish rule, which, requiring the same consonants, permitted broad and slender vowels to alliterate.

In his shorter compositions, the Irish features are equally distinct. We find them in his celebrated Hymn :

" **A** solis **o**rtus **c**ardine  
**A**d **u**sque terræ limilem,  
**C**hristum **c**anamus principem  
*Natum Maria virgine.*

" **B**eatus auctor **s**eculi  
**S**eruile corpus induit,  
**U**t carne **c**arnem liberans  
**N**e perderet **q**uos condidit.

There are what one may call stolen alliterations, in the first couplet of the second stanza, where the last letters of "beatus" and "corpus," coming before vowels, serve as initials. Sometimes, as in "detulit" and "sus-tulit," both vowels and consonants rime, as occasionally in ancient Irish verses.

In this way I have tested and discovered the presence of ancient Irish characteristics in the Sedulian verses. In addition, I have found a counter-test, which affirms my position in the most satisfactory manner. This, with other hymns, came under the Revisers of the Roman Breviary, in the days of Urban VIII. These erudite Latinists took in hand the lines :

" **P**arvoque lacte **p**astus est  
**P**er quem nec **a**les **e**surit."

They are perfect, judged by the bardic standard. The Latinists, demurring to the adjective, altered the first line thus :—

“Et lacte modico pastus est.”

By so doing they destroyed the careful Celtic alliteration, which had escaped their ears. The Parisian Latinists made a yet greater change :

“Et indiget lactis cibo.”

This annihilates not only the alliteration, but the end-rime ! Again, let us take another instance. The hymn is abecedarian—each stanza begins with a different letter, in due succession. In that beginning with “h,” Sedulius wrote :

“**H**ostis **H**erodes impie  
**C**hristum venire quid times,  
**N**on eripit **m**ortalia.”  
**Q**ui regna dat cœlestia.”

Erasmus first, and the Revisers afterwards, protested that “hostis,” followed by “Herodes,” was a trochee and should not be found in iambic metre. Arevalus noted, later, that the “h” of the proper name being aspirated, had the force of a consonant, and left “hostis” a spondee, which is allowable. The Irishman aspirated the “h” ; the Romans occasionally dropped it. However, the revising Latinists thought to set things right by a few touches. They accomplished this :—

“Crudelis Herodes deum  
 Regem venire quid times.”

With what marvellous rapidity the Irish characteristics have disappeared! The alliterative structure of both lines is destroyed, and the perfect end-rime rendered imperfect. The subtle sound-echoes which charm the bardic ear are expurged, in order to satisfy the metrical Latin ear. It is as if an artist, imbued with a perfect sense of form, but colour-blind, proceeded to revise the drawing in another artist's picture, and, whilst correcting its lines, painted out its more delicate tints.

The presence of characteristics, so readily recognized by those conversant with Gaelic verse, and their erasure by the unwitting Latin Revisers, supply the test and the counter-test. By these we demonstrate that the characteristics in question were Irish, not accidental peculiarities natural to a Latin poet, and from these we can deduce the bard's nationality. Huemer, who doubts that Sedulius was an Irishman, as Trithemius stated, was not aware of the intrinsic evidence here indicated.

The question of the transfusion into Latin verse of Irish peculiarities is one of such curious interest that a few examples may be added. They passed chiefly into the Latin hymns, and, through the hymns, influenced the verse-forms of European literatures when these became articulate.

The fifth century, which gave Sedulius and St. Patrick to letters, gave also St. Secundinus, a nephew and contemporary of the latter. His verses in praise of St. Patrick betray the influence of the bardic schools. Zeuss drew attention to some rimes sprinkled through the verses (as "*omnes amantes*"), but I would point to other and yet more remarkable signs, such as alliteration and internal rime: these are so characteristically Gaelic that

they readily escape general notice. Take the opening lines :

“ **A**udite omnes amantes  
Deum *sancta* merita  
Uiri in Christi *beati*  
*Patricii* episcopi.

“ Quomodo bonum ob *actum*  
*Simulatur* angelis  
**P**erfectamque propter *uitam*  
**Æ**quatur apostolis.”

In the first couplet, “ant” and “anct” rime; in the second, “ati” and “atri.” In the third couplet “actum” and “atur” have the same vowels, and in the fourth, “vitam” and “æqua” have similar vowels. Some consonants, too, reappear. The last syllables of the last two words in the first four lines rime. In the second quatrain there is alternate monosyllabic end-rime. The bards varied the metre, occasionally, in Irish.

“Sancti, Venite” the celebrated post-communion hymn, attributed to the same bard—angels are said to have sung it in his church at Bangor—is constructed on a Gaelic model. Here, however, five-syllabled lines alternate with those of seven syllables. To the ordinary eye or ear, there must seem little or most imperfect rime in the following stanza. Once, however, it is tested by the standard of Irish verse-structure, the perfection of the riming is made clear :

“ Sancti *venite*  
Christi corpus **SUMITE** :  
Sanctum *bibentes*  
Quo *redempti* SANGUINEM.”

There is perfect rime in the first couplet, between the two "slender" vowel-sounds (i e and i i); and in the second between the three similar sounds (i e e and e e i). The last words of the second and fourth lines rime with equal completeness—each having one "broad" and two "slender" vowels (u i e and a i e). Here is another stanza where, at first glance, there appears to be no rime, except in the letter "m" of the second and last lines. It unfolds its perfection to the Gaelic test :

*" Lucis indultor  
Et saluator OMNIUM,  
Præclaram sanctis  
Largitus est GRATIAM."*

It is only necessary to point out that, in the last words of the second and fourth lines there is perfect vowel-rime, according to the Gaelic rule, between o i u and a i a. The bard was not always so successful, sometimes he ekes out his rime, and sometimes foregoes it ; but it is so elaborate that its presence proves purpose.

In the sixth century, St. Columbcille, a bilingual bard, contributed Gaelic and Latin verse. His "Altus," a famous hymn of old, was composed in trochaic tetrameter, as Bede notes. A writer in the ancient "Lebor Breac," distinguishing between "artificialis" rhythm, with feet of equal times, equal divisions, and equal weight, "arsis" and "thesis," and "vulgaris" rhythm, where there is correspondence of syllables in quatrains and half-quatrains, says the hymn is composed in this popular rhythm. It is noteworthy that these characters are those of the Gaelic stanza. St. Columbcille uses



trisyllabic rime, well known to the Gael, and occasionally obtains internal chimes :

“ Altus prositor *uetustus*  
Dierum et *ingenitus*,  
Erat absque *origine*  
Primordii et *crepidine*.”

In another octosyllabic hymn he also employs four-syllabled rime, where consonants sometimes chime :

“ Noli pater *indulgere*<sup>1</sup>  
Tonitrua cum *fulgure*  
Ac frangamur *formidine*  
Hujus atque *uridine*.”

Twenty years later St. Columbanus flourished, a fine classic scholar, to whose efforts and example the revival of classical literature on the Continent was largely due. Though Columbanus composed in classic metres, he did not fail to introduce Irish alliterative and final rimes, *e.g.* :

“ Dilexerunt tenebras tetras magis quam *lucem*,  
Imitari contemnunt vitæ Domini *ducem*.”

His charming poem to Fedolius, so praised for its pure latinity, I show, in Appendix, to possess also vowel rime throughout.

In the seventh century flourished the poet-saints Ultan, Cummain, and Colman.

The structure of the hymn of St. Ultan, in honour of St. Brigit, is exceedingly curious and interesting. The riming has escaped attention because of its very pro-

<sup>1</sup> G is pronounced hard in Irish.

fusion. The editor of the "Liber Hymnorum" saw only "asonances" in the middle and end of each line, with possibly alliteration.<sup>1</sup> Take the first two lines :

"Christus in nostra insola quæ vocatur hibernia  
Ostensus est hominibus maximis mirabilibus."

This gives but a meagre monosyllabic rime. Rime, though concealed, is amazingly abundant. In the first line, for instance, there are three trisyllabic internal rimes, as here shown :

*"in-nostra insola quæ-voca."*

In the second line there are also three :

*"ostensus<sup>2</sup> homini maximis."*

In the first line the rimes run on one "slender" and two "broad" vowels : in the second this is ingeniously reversed, and the rimes are formed of one "broad" and two "slender" vowels. In addition, I would point out that the lines terminate in trisyllabic vowel rime, for "bernia" and "bilibus" correspond in sound. Curiously enough, they supply a third combination, having two "slender" vowels first and one "broad" vowel. And there is an extra four-syllabled rime, for "hominibus"

<sup>1</sup> His omission is doubtless due to the fact that, following Zeuss, his attention was only given to the observation of end-rimes. A new edition of the "Liber Hymnorum" has since appeared, in which the Editors deal with the matter, more minutely.

<sup>2</sup> The last syllable preceding a vowel is short, and the vowel is regarded apparently as sufficiently slender.

is in full asonance with "abilibus." The third line reads thus :

"Que perfecit per felicem celestis uite uirginem."

The trisyllabic rimes are five ; but here all are yielded by the slender vowels :

*"perfecit per-feli cem-cele tis-uite uirginem."*

St. Ultan's hymn may be the source of the popularity of the verses known as "Tripudiantes."

St. Cummain Fota's hymn is noticeable by its alliteration and trisyllabic rimes :

"Celebra iuda festa Christi gaudia  
Apostulorum exultans memoria."

In the eighth century, St. Cucuimne (who died A.D. 742) employed both vowel and consonant rime, with alliteration, in a manner most dear to the Gaelic bards of Munster a thousand years later. It is not necessary to italicize the rimes in such verses as these :

"Bis per chorum hinc et inde collaudemus Mariam  
Ut vox pulset omnem aurem per laudem uicariam,  
Maria de tribu iudæ summi mater domini  
Oportunam dedit curam egrotanti homini."

These are even more remarkable :

"Maria mater miranda patrem suum edidit  
Per quem aqua late lotus totus mundus credidit.  
Tonicam per totum textam Christi mater fecerat  
Quæ peracta Christi morte sorte statim steterat."

If we arrange two lines in the form of the Irish quatrain, it will be seen how completely they conform to its rules :

“ Maria **miranda mater**  
*Patrem suum edidit,*  
 Per quem aqua late **lotus**  
*Totus mundus creditit.*”

His cotemporary, St. Ængus, son of Tipraite, makes use of woven rime with like liberality in his hymn to St. Martin. As written the lines are :

“ Martinus mirus more ore laudavit deum,  
 Puro corde cantavit atque amavit eum.”

Here we see the rimes, but not the system, until we arrange the lines as a Gaelic quatrain :

“ **Martinus mirus more**  
*Ore laudavit deum,*  
 Puro corde *cantavit*  
 Atque *amavit eum.*

In the ninth century another Sedulius (“Scottus”) was esteemed a distinguished poet. His poem, “The Contest of the Rose and the Lily” might, for conception and treatment, be one of Moore’s, it is so light, graceful, and harmonious. It leads the way of the lighter poetic literature of Europe. —Mingled with the measured tread of its hexameters, one hears the musical Irish chimes :

“ **Ciclica quadrifidis** currebant tempora **melis**  
**Uernabat uario** tellus decorataque peplo,  
**Lactea cum roseis** certabant lilia **sertis,**  
**Cum rosa sic croceo** sermones prompserat **ore.**”

Not the least interesting of the bardic Latin poems is one which belonged to the monastery of St. Gall. Dating from the middle of the ninth century, it conforms to the Latin rules in externals, but its substance is essentially Irish. In slumber the bard suddenly beholds the radiant vision of a golden-haired maiden, beautiful beyond the daughters of the earth, with brow brighter than the sun of the heavens. She calms his fears, and tells her name. It is Wisdom. Nine hundred years later almost every bard sang of a similar vision, but the celestial maid was Erinn.

Through their Latin poetry, and especially through their hymns, carried abroad over Europe, taught and chanted in many schools and monasteries, the Irish influenced the germinating literatures of Europe. The languages developing from the Latin were naturally directly affected. This was clearly the case in Spain, though it has been strangely overlooked until now. A few words will make this manifest.

The old Spanish *redondellas* were quatrains, with rimes between first and fourth, or second and fourth lines. "Their prominent peculiarity," writes Ticknor, "and one which they have succeeded in impressing upon a very large portion of all the national poetry, is one which—being found to prevail in no other literature—may be claimed to have its origin in Spain, and becomes therefore an important circumstance in Spanish poetical culture." With this preamble, note the fact: "The peculiarity to which we refer," he adds, "is the *asonante*, an imperfect rhyme confined to the vowels, and beginning with the last accented one in the line, it embraces sometimes only the very last syllable, and sometimes goes

back to the penultimate, or even the antepenultimate." He cites as examples the riming of (1) "feróz" with "furor ;" of (2) "cása" with "abárca ;" of (3) "infamia" with "contrária."

Now the slightest knowledge of Irish prosody would have prevented an error such as this, and shown that, far from being a Spanish peculiarity, *asonante* was known and cultivated in Ireland centuries before a line of Spanish was written. It is pitiable to see Bello tracing its origin to the "Vita Mathildis," and Ticknor (whilst rejecting this theory, for the poem was unknown in Spain), declaring that the poem "was singular in this attempt," in presence of so many hymns, and of the works of Sedulius, who was exceedingly popular in Spain.

There is another characteristic of Spanish rime which emphatically proclaims its origin. Ticknor describes it as "a great poetic licence," by which different words were allowed to rime: "Thus 'u' and 'o' were held to be *asonante*, as in 'Venus' and 'minos,' 'i' and 'e' as in 'Paris' and 'males.'"

Now here we have stated, with a start of surprise at the audacity of the licence, a rule of vowel-rime which has been known in Ireland from of old until the present day, the rule, namely, of correspondence between the broad vowels "o" and "u" (and "a"), and between the slender vowels "i" and "e"! There could not well be a more complete evidence of filiation.

VII. In the three centuries after St. Patrick, Erin became an Island of Learning—the University of Europe. Strangers flocked thither for instruction from all nations, and from none more fervently than from the Anglo-Saxon. They were hailed with a hōspitality which has

never been equalled. Venerable Bede gratefully testifies that the Irish received all comers with a liberal welcome, hospitably entertained them, gave them books to read, instruction in the arts and sciences, food and shelter, and all gratuitously. From their great schools and monasteries men went forth over Scotland, England, and the Continent, forming centres of teaching everywhere, developing the literary instinct or culture of other nations, and infusing into its poetical forms the characteristics of Gaelic verse.

In Gaelic, many hymns and poems relating to religious subjects made their appearance subsequent to the "Guardman's Cry." They show originality and independence of thought and expression. Perhaps the earliest is the hymn of St. Ita (who was born A.D. 480); it is classic in form and bold in conception. The absolute faith of the ancient Irish inspired them with the love which casts out fear, and their poems show no trace of servile dread. They prefixed the pronoun "mo," "my," to the names of their saints, which they modified by fond diminutives. St. Ita, in this way, uses an endearing diminutive with the name of the Redeemer. "Isa," the ancient Irish form of Jesus (which is now "Iosa"), became "Isucan"—Jesukin—in her poem. It was applied to the infant Saviour who, it was believed, abode with her at night, in her lone cell in the desert.

"Jesukin,  
Lives my little cell within:  
What were wealth of cleric *high*  
All is *lie* but Jesukin."

Three lines end in monosyllabic rime, while there is



rime (sometimes disyllabic) between the end word of the third, and an internal word in the fourth lines.

Next may come the poems of Cellach. He was a student under St. Kieran, who died A.D. 540, in the famous School of Clonmicnois, whose ruins declare its former greatness. His father, King Eogan of Connacht, when dying, induced him to leave his studies, and to rule the kingdom. Then a powerful rival arose, who expelled him. The first poem, in regular metre, in which he regrets his student life, was composed when a fugitive in the forests, with a band of outlaws. The other is more tragic, and gives us a remarkable example of how the bard could adapt his metre to the dramatic requirements of his subject. The usurper bribed Cellach's four pupils, chief of whom was Melcron, to murder him. They laid violent hands upon him in the wood; but spared his life for one night, keeping him imprisoned in a hollow tree. When the night had past, he opened the door of his prison, but as the first ray of dawn fell upon him, he closed it suddenly against the fatal light. Then, after a moment's thought, he threw wide the door, and welcomed the morn which brings him death :

“ 'Tis my Love the Morning fair,  
 Floating, flame-like, through the air !  
 'Tis my Love who sends her too  
 Victor-Morning, ever new.

“ O Morning, fair and tender !  
 O Sister of Sun's Splendour !  
 Welcome thou, O Morning fair !  
 Shining on my booklet there.”

By a sudden transition of thought and dramatically

abrupt change of metre, he apostrophizes the scall-crow, which sat watching for his death. Other birds and beasts of prey there are, and the verse is varied :

“O constant, croaking *Raven!*  
Is thy hunger-*craving* fresh?  
Rise not from this rath-topt *hill—*  
Thou shalt have thy *fill* of flesh.”

The kite shall come, to bear off his talons' full, and the

“Fox in forest lurking low  
He shall hear and hail the blow;  
He will bear my flesh and blood  
Through the wild, dark, dreary wood.”

The red wolf will rush thither, ruler of the robbers.

Again the measure is changed, whilst 'he recalls the foreboding visions ; and yet again whilst he pathetically reproaches Melcron for his treason. Not for the world's wealth would Cellach have betrayed Melcron ; he would have sacrificed all to save him from being a traitor. But the voice of the Redeemer comes to Cellach, saying that though foemen gave him to earth, He gave him to heaven.

This lay, with its strong ideas and rapid changes, proves the dramatic capacity of its author. It is noteworthy for another reason. Cellach foresees the rending of his body, and the redemption of his soul. Compare this passage with the verses written by the Marquis of Montrose (1650) after the death sentence which doomed him to the barbarous penalties of high treason, and observe how closely they correspond in spirit :

“Let them bestow on every airt a limb,  
 Then open all my veins that I may swim  
 To thee, my Maker, in that crimson lake :  
 Then place my parboiled head upon a stake,  
 Scatter my ashes, strew them in the air ;  
 Lord, since thou knowest where all those atoms are,  
 I am hopefull Thou’lt recover once my dust  
 And confident Thou’lt raise me with the Just.”

The poems of St. Columba, or St. Columbcille, have the singular merit of being the first poems,<sup>1</sup> in non-classic letters, which display and proclaim Love of Country. They are, similarly, the first poems of exile.

“There’s an eye of gray  
 Looks back to Erinn, far away :  
 While life lasts, ’twill see no more  
 Man nor maid on Erinn’s shore.”

Even yet the emigrant peasant, before leaving Donegal, goes to pass a night on the flag-stone which marks St. Columba’s birthplace, in the hope of obtaining strength to bear the sorrow of exile. St. Columba left his country, because having made a copy of a book, it was refused him by the owner of the original. The umpire-king decided this first question of copyright in the words “Let the calf follow the cow.” A war arose in consequence. Having vowed never to see his beloved Erinn

<sup>1</sup> Love of country is expressed, in prose, in “The Fate of the Children of Usnach.” To the Envoy sent to invite them to return, Deirdré urged that their lordship in Alba (Scotland) was greater than Conobar’s in Erinn. “Better the native land than anything,” replied Fergus, “for displeasing it is to one, however great his prosperity and power, if he sees not his own country each day.” “It is true,” said Naisi, “for dearer to me is Erinn than Alba though I should obtain more in Alba than in Erinn.”

again, St. Columba was induced to visit it once—but he went blind-folded to save the Bards from expulsion—the oppression of their corporation having become so excessive that the princes refused to endure it longer.

Intense love of nature, sincerity, and simplicity, characterize the verses of St. Columba. He was a natural poet who sang of the welcome of the white-winged sea-gulls, the cuckoo's call at "the brink of summer," the swooning breeze in the elm, the beauty of Benn Edar above its breakers, and the bright-bosomed sea.

There is a marked contrast between his style and that of his eulogist Eocaid—surnamed Dallan—because he became blind from over-study. The latter was one of the great Bardic Corporation, whose training had gone so far that natural expression seemed too common. Preference for a poetic diction has often led to artificiality such as that against which Wordsworth revolted, but who would expect to find that this was the case, more than twelve hundred years ago, in Ireland? Men and nations pass through evolutionary cycles, and even poets do not escape. It is, however, a singular fate that Irish poetry should seem to some to be in the primary stage of evolution,—because it completed its cycle so long ago, in an ancient language. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That the ancient civilisation of Erin had its period of Decadence may be inferred from an ancient satire on the poets (the "Heavy Company," tr. by O. Connellan, Ossianic Society). In this tract, a Decadent Bard recites an eulogistic poem to a king; the latter admires it vastly, but observes that he should be gratified by an explanation of its meaning. Then the Bard minutely explains his symbolism which was otherwise incomprehensible. Ancient and modern Symbolists had thus a common crypt to inter their meaning.

Dallan, a cotemporary of St. Columba, wrote an Eulogy on him, and would have recited it, had he not been restrained, as the saint held that no man should be praised until his death. This Eulogy is extant. It was written in a style so archaic that few could comprehend it. Hence, as Colgan says, the more learned antiquaries illustrated his writings with commentaries. In Colgan's day it was still customary to lecture on, and expound them, in the schools, as rare monuments of the ancient language. Spenser, we know, wrote a comparatively archaic language, Ronsard went far in latinizing French, and Euphues manipulated the English of his time. The strange thing is that these and others were anticipated by Dallan many centuries before. For instance, he did not hesitate to add a syllable, as "Culu" for "Cul," or to retrench a letter as "ru," "ra," for "run," "ran," or to add a letter, as "tenn" for "ten," or to change an initial as "sencas" for "Fencas." These instances of poets' licence were duly noted and classified by his commentators.

It is even more interesting to discover that many centuries ago these learned critics analysed, grouped, and classified various rhetorical devices, which poets of the present use, unaware of the fact, and without comment. Byron may exclaim: "Roll on, thou dark and deep blue ocean, roll," and Tennyson: "Break, break, break, On thy cold grey stones O Sea;" we hear and admire.

The ancient Irish lecturers did more: they analysed and classified. Thus, when Dallan repeated "Dia, Dia" (God, God), they explained that he redoubled the first word to show the quickness and eagerness of his praise.

They point out, also (as O'B. Crowe translates it), that this device is known to the Gael as "a return to a wonted sound." This happens when Columba speaks of "the pale, pale sea." Then it is noted that there are three species of repetition. First, the doubling of one word in the cycle, without further repetition. Second, re-narration, or the repetition of one word, with others between, as in the verse :

"Rushed the sea up the strand,  
Rushed the ox thro' the band,  
Rushed, as gallant and grand,  
Brave Cu Dinisk the brown."

This anticipates such turns as Sir Walter Scott loved, *e.g.* "Pibroch of Donuil Dhu ; Pibroch of Donuil," and which Burns also used : "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled ; Scots wham Bruce has often led."

The third kind was more artificial, and 'was scarcely employed : it could only be used in scenes of passionate emotion. It was termed re-folding or re-duplication, and may be represented thus :

"Away, away, O flee, flee,  
This dark, dark day, o'er the wide, wide sea !"

These remarks from the Commentaries on the Eulogy will suffice to show with what analytical faculty the elder writers entered on their work, and how far advanced they were in culture. Where such attention was given by minds so keen and subtle to verse-structure, it is little wonder that they anticipated many of the modern methods.

Next in order of date is the Dirge for Conall Claen,



by his wife (A.D. 634). Original in idea and perfect in form, it is clearly an outburst of the heart. We see the desolate woman, standing by her slain husband, recalling all his looks and all his warrior prowess. Then, at last, she sees the Clay, his Fortress, forever—

“Och!—and here his Fort for aye,—  
The strong cold clay, for all the years!  
Conall's Fort!—where I deplore  
Whose tale is o'er—the House of Tears.”

Another example of the daring imagination of the ancient Irish is the ascription of the authorship of a poem to the Devil. The “Sorrrows of Satan” may seem new to this generation, but the theme was treated over twelve hundred years ago in Gaelic verse. The date is fixed, so far as may be, from the mention of the name of St. Moling in connection with the cause of Satan's Song, as the saint became bishop A.D. 632. It is amusing to notice that the “Hill-top Novels” of another cotemporary were partially anticipated (in name) by the “Hill-top Satires” of the ancient Irish.

Perhaps we may assign to this period another exceedingly striking poem, the “Lamentations of the Mothers of Bethlehem.” No author's name is given. The terrible grief of the distraught mothers of murdered babes is represented in terms of reckless fidelity. The verse-form chosen is the irregular passionate “Rosg,” and here, though there is some trace of entrance-rime (as I hold), the poem seems otherwise devoid of rime, and is another example of Irish blank verse.

From the construction of this and similar pieces, I am tempted to infer that there were some forms of dramatic



presentation—miracle plays and dramas—amongst the ancient Gael. <sup>1</sup>

We come now upon a literary curiosity. St. Colman (the second), Lecturer in the Theological School of Cork, died in the year 661. Now of the twenty-three stanzas which constitute the original hymn, six are remarkable for the manner in which the author mingles Latin lines or rimes with the vernacular Gaelic. As this is the earliest specimen of this kind of Macaronic poetry in European literature, it should have been noticed before now. Three stanzas may be quoted :

“Regem regum rogamus in nostris sermonibus  
Anacht Noe a luchtlach diluuii temporibus.

“Melchisedech rex Salem incerto de semine  
Ron soerat a airnighe ab omni formidine.

“Abram de Ur na galdai snaidsium ruri ronsnada  
Soersum soerus in popul limpa fontis ingaba.”

Another example of this blending of Latin and Irish will be found in the hymn of Maelisu, at the beginning of the eleventh century. Irish bards have consequently been the first to set the fashion of bilingual song, traces of which still linger in the student songs of France and Germany.

This period may close with an excerpt from the Calendar of Ængus the Cele De, composed in the eighth century. The passage quoted is a triumph-lay, and comes as a flash of invigorating sunshine.

The ascetic old anchoret had the spirit of a revolutionist of a pure type. No doubt he had heard bards

<sup>1</sup> See, in Appendix, the “Fate of Usnach’s Sons,” a Drama.

lamenting bygone glories, and extolling the state and splendour of warrior-kings. With uplifted head, he strikes a new and resonant chord. Our Palaces have fallen, he exclaims, but behold how our Universities flourish! The pomp of paganism has gone, but behold how Christian love advances! Mighty despots, gory warriors disappear, but the scholar, the sage, and the saint arise and are glorified in their stead. For the first time the triumph of Mind was celebrated in song in Europe.

The metre is intricate. Each line is of six syllables, ending in a dissyllable. Those which conclude the second and fourth lines rime, and there may also be internal rime. In the first couplets, two, three, or four words alliterate, and each stanza is often linked to its successor by an echo of its last initial or last word, or even of its last line. Dr. Whitley Stokes dwells upon the peculiarities of this metre in his Introduction, partly because Ezzardi regards it as the model of the Skaldic *dróttvætt*, especially the *hattlausá*.

There are also some stanzas with alternate double rimes, such as this :

“Brog emna rotetha  
Acht mairit a clocha  
Isruam iarthair betha  
Glend dalach da locha.”

It will be noticed that there is complete bisonant<sup>1</sup> alternate rime. I have taken this form for a model, as I sought the line of least resistance, and omitted the “fidrad” which is not constant, for the same reason.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, vowel and consonant.

The variation of metre, desirable in a long poem, is not so needful in a short extract.

“Ruins strew the regions  
Once Emania's palace,—  
Rome revives its legions  
In Glenlocha's valleys.”

VIII. Another period of nearly four centuries may be taken. This comprises the space between the establishment of the great Hiberno-Norse empire at the beginning of the ninth, to the arrival of the Normans from England at the close of the twelfth century.

The literature of this period could be simply and succinctly disposed of, if one were to adopt the current view, expressed in all modern pseudo-histories,<sup>1</sup> which declares that the “Danes” ravaged the country, burned the cities, murdered the monks, and made a particular point of “drowning” and destroying all books; this continued until their power was annihilated at Clontarf, and Christendom achieved its final triumph over militant Paganism. Those who repeat the tale have not examined the testimony borne by the literatures of the Gael and the Norse.

The Irish annals declare that the wars in Erin were more frequent and sanguinary, in the centuries which preceded the establishment of that empire, than in those which followed. The Norse sagas show that the power of the Hiberno-Norse kings immediately after Clontarf was greater than before it. In the Catalogue of Irish

<sup>1</sup> In all recent books and booklets, where the subject is mentioned, the Danes (who never were in Ireland,) still ravage the country with unabated enthusiasm.

Writers, nine are named for the century preceding the empire ; seven of more distinction flourished in the century following ; in the next eight, and in the next eighteen. The Annals of the Four Masters mention forty bishops in the eighth century, and eighty in the tenth ; they mention thirty learned men of distinction in the eighth, and sixty-three in the tenth. These statistics are fully borne out by the fact that important manuscripts, such as the "Book of Leinster" and the "Lebar na huidre," date from this period, and by the evidence of many works. It was a period of great intellectual activity, when minds were quickened.

The Norsemen were no new comers in the ninth century. Gaelic writers state that the fair race of the Tuata Dé Dananns came to Erin from Norway, where they had settled. If we consider them as early Norse, which I think probable, these were in constant touch with the island before and after the coming of the southern Milesians. The Annals of Ireland record several intermarriages in ancient times. Thus, in the second century King Tuatal the Legitimate married a Norse princess, Scal's daughter, and their son also espoused a Norland princess. King Cormac Mac Art, in the third century, the first Christian king, was grandson of a Norsewoman. There were two Norse ancestresses in the lineage of Ossian, the last great pagan bard—whilst Secundinus, the first Irish hymn-writer in Erin, was the son of one of the Longobards who are supposed to have then recently left Norway.

These statements prove, at least, that the Irish believed in close connections between Gael and Norse, in ancient times. They tend to confirm the statement

in the "Book of Rights" that St. Patrick found a Norse colony at Dublin. Over a century and a half before the alleged first coming of the Northmen, the bard Rumann, "The Virgil of Erin," according to an ancient vellum MS. in the Bodleian Library "composed a great poem for the Galls of Ath-Cliath" (*i.e.*, the Norsemen of Hurdle-ford, or Dublin). They declined to pay his price. Then he made an epigram, declaring he would take their honour if not their gold, whereupon they bade him make his own award. He awarded himself two pinginns (coins) from every noble Gall, and one from every mean Gall. All gave him two.<sup>1</sup> "And the Galls then told him to praise the sea, that they might know whether his was original poetry or not." Then he spoke :

"A great tempest on the plain of Lir" (*i.e.*, the sea).

The bard retired with his wealth to Cell Belaigh (near Rahen, King's Co.), which was a university town. "At this time Cell Belaigh had seven streets of Galls (*i.e.*, Norsemen) in it; and Rumann gave the third of his wealth to it because of its extent, and a third part to the schools, and he took a third part to Rahen."<sup>2</sup> O'Curry candidly confesses that "There is no doubt but that there were foreigners settled in Dublin and in other parts of the east and south-east in the peaceful pursuits of trade and commerce long before the fierce invaders of the ninth century."

<sup>1</sup> Among the Gaels, the prince gave the guerdon; hence the narrator was conversant with the Norse custom. A version of this fine poem is given in this (second) edition.

<sup>2</sup> O'Curry, "Manners and Customs," vol. ii., lecture xx.

In Rumann's time one-third of the university city of Armagh was set apart for foreign students, chiefly, but not exclusively, Saxons. Many of the nobility and of the lower ranks of the English nation, says Bede, were in Ireland at that period, studying under Irish professors.

Even the warrior-invaders of the ninth century showed a higher respect for civilisation and letters than partisan historians declare. Judge by this entry in the annals for the year 919. "The spoyle of Armagh, by Godfrith O h-Ivar with his men *who saved the houses of prayer, with the people of God and lepers, and the whole churche towne*, except some houses that were burnt by neglect." Later on, in 1020, an exception is made of "*the houses of manuscripts.*"

The Norse relate that when Heriulf sailed to Greenland (about 986) he took with him a South Island Christian—apparently an Irish monk from Iona. Expert in Norse, he composed the "Halgerdingar," or "Sea-Walls" song, in memory of great earthquake waves. It was composed on a Gaelic model, and may be thus rendered :

"All around should bear the chalice  
That was found in Dwarfs' dim palace ;<sup>1</sup>  
May the Friend of Monks, the purest,  
Make my faring safe and surest,  
Let the Lord of Earth's high ceiling  
Lift his hand o'er me appealing."

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<sup>1</sup> The Dwarfs' Cup is a Kenning or synonym for poetry. Obscure allusions and synonyms of this kind, used and abused by the ancient Irish bards, were transfused into Norse verse.



Pseudo-historians confound Viking raids with Sea-kings' expeditions. They falsify the balance of judgment by denouncing all warlike advances of the Norse, whilst they suppress or glorify the forays against them and others. Above all, they ignore the secular plunder of Leinster, for the Borumean tribute, by the other Irish kingdoms—a cruel persecution which made Leinster welcome the Norse as allies and deliverers. The ancient Irish authors bore honorable testimony. They told of wars, but they told also of intimate alliances, of many intermarriages between the ruling families of the Norse and Irish, and relate the fosterage of letters by the Hiberno-Norse. Thus, at the beginning of the eleventh century, the chief bards of the Monarch of Erin, and of King Brian Boruma, enjoyed the hospitality of King Olaf in Dublin for an entire year. For twelve months they left their own courts without chief poets, whilst they gave their finest efforts to the Irish Norse. "Time for us to return homeward," at last wrote Mac Liag in a farewell ode to Erard, "we have been here a year, though short to thee and me seem our sojourn in Dublin."

This is the same Mac Liag whose "Wars of the Gael and Gall," which relate the battle of Clontarf, A.D. 1014, have passages of rhetorical invective against the Norse. So much was allowable in a poet laureate. But his work candidly declares the cause of war, and justifies them; they fought at the urgent invitation of King Brian's queen. From his impassioned descriptions all readers infer a fierce hostility between the races. Yet, immediately after the battle, Mac Liag again received the hospitality of Dublin, where he went to see a dead chief,



his patron, whom the Norse-Irish were about to inter honorably. He eulogized them in verse, which O'Curry thus translates :

“Heavily yet lightly have I come to Dublin,  
 To the court of Olaf of the golden shields;  
 From Dublin of the swords and the graves  
 Swift yet slow shall be my departure.  
 O men of Dublin of the bells,  
 Including abbots and bishops;  
 Raise not the earth over Tadg  
 Till I have bestowed on him a last look.”

Those he writes of, in these terms, are the same whom the pseudo-historians villify as “pagan Danes,” though their erection and liberal endowment of Christ Church are on record. It is a significant thing that, when Mac Liag composed his lament in exile for his King Brian, the bard's place of refuge was in the Hebrides, the “Isles of the Gall,” among the generous Norse-Irish. Their esteem for letters, and their tolerance, must have been great when the bard of their enemy sought them, and sang amongst them the praise of their fallen foe.

Cuan O'Lochain was one of the Duumvirate of Sages to whom the government of the country was intrusted after Clontarf. He was the author of the “Book of Rights,” in which are the words of St. Benenn relating how St. Patrick blessed the foreigners of Dublin, and endowed them with seven gifts. If this be not of St. Benenn, it must be the work of Cuan, and the prophecy becomes a testimony borne by the Legislator of Erin to the high qualities of the Norse-Irish.

Some ninety years later King Magnus sang in Dublin

of his Irish Love, and in his verse revealed the influence of the bards :

“Hvatt skal heim-faor kvitta hugr er min í Dyflinni,  
Enn til kaupangs kvenna kem-ek eigi austr í hausti.  
Unik því at eigi synjar Injan gaman-þinga ;  
Oerskan velar því er Irskom ann-ek betr an mer svanna.”<sup>1</sup>

A hundred years later, at the close of the twelfth century, a Gaelic bard addressed an impassioned poem to Randal, Lord of Arran (Scotland), grandson of Godfrey, Norse-Irish King of Dublin, urging him to vindicate his claim to the sovereignty of Erin. He promised him that, if he went, the Hill of Tara would ring with music for Randal, “the best of the world’s kings.”<sup>2</sup>

The influence of Irish verse-structure on the Norse may be illustrated briefly by comparing the production of an Irish bard with that of King Magnus. St. Mura wrote in the metre called “Rinnard,” with three alliterations, as follows :

Fland tendalach temrach  
tendrig fotla feraind.”

King Magnus wrote :

“Enn til kaupangs kvenna  
kem-ek eigi austr í hausti.”

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<sup>1</sup> “Why should we think of going home? My heart is in Dublin, and I shall not go back in the autumn to Chipping (Nidaros). I am glad that the darling does not deny me her favour. Youth makes me love the Irish girl better than myself.”—*Corpus Poeticum Boreale*: Vigfusson and York Powell.

<sup>2</sup> O’Curry, “Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish,” vol. iii., lecture xxxv.

It will be noticed at once that the system of alliteration is alike in both. In both, also, there appears an imperfect rime between the last word of the first, and the first word of the second line. Systematic letter-stress or alliteration was an essential in Norse and in Anglo-Saxon verse. It is seen in this specimen from *Beowulf*, usually written as one line—

“rice to rune  
rædes eahtedon.”

Another and a most remarkable characteristic of Gaelic verse is the rule which, requiring the repetition of the same consonant for alliteration, permits different vowels to alliterate. Both this law and this exception are found in Norse and in Anglo-Saxon verse-structure. We must conclude, I believe, that they were transferred into these literatures from the Irish, because this was the most ancient, the most cultivated, the most copious in metrical methods, and because both Norsemen and Anglo-Saxons had opportunities for learning ancient Irish, and made great use of these opportunities. The Anglo-Saxons, who thronged the university city of Armagh, and those who studied under the Irish teachers of Northumbria, would have been dull indeed had they not gleaned so much of Irish prosody. The occasional profusion of unaccented words, or “slurs,” in both Norse and Anglo-Saxon, which seem a distinguishing mark, may be an imitation of the seemingly irregular Gaelic “*Rosg*.”

Vigfusson recognised the influence of Irish versification on the Norse: “Bragi’s innovation of the line-rhyme,” he wrote, “and the more regular stressing we should certainly ascribe to foreign influence, probably

Keltic : we can account for it in no other way." Bragi's line, he adds, was "the fountain head of various court-metres." End-rimes occurred in the west, under Irish influence, for they are "alien to old Teutonic poetry."

Burthens, which Bragi introduced, must likewise have been borrowed from the Irish, and the "kennings" or synonyms, often so obscure and so complex, are clearly an imitation of the fashion of some ancient Irish bards.

In the middle of the ninth century Queen Aud, widow of White Olaf, King of Dublin, retired to Iceland on the death of her son. Many of her Irish connections by marriage and their followers accompanied her, and from this Norse-Irish colony sprang the authors of the Sagas. "The bulk of the settlers," wrote Vigfusson, "were men who, at least for one generation, had dwelt among a Keltic population and undergone an influence which an old and strongly marked civilization invariably exercises." Again, "we find among the emigrants of all ranks men and women of pure Irish and Scottish blood, as also many sprung from mixed marriages, and traces of this crossing survive in the Irish names borne by some of the foremost characters of the Heroic Age of Iceland, especially the poets, of whom it is also recorded that they were dark men." And Professor York Powell, writing of the Eddas, which bear traces of southern knowledge, said : "It is well to remark that among the first poets we have any knowledge of the majority are of mixed blood, with an Irish ancestress not far back in the family tree. . . . Their physical characteristics, dark hair and black eyes, like Sighvat and Kormack (Cormac), their reckless passion and wonderful fluency are also non-Teutonic and speak of their alien descent."

The filiation of the Norse literature to that of ancient Ireland has been amply acknowledged: the debt of the Anglo-Saxon insufficiently. Guest, however, showed goodwill but had not data at hand. Stopford Brooke has demonstrated how plentiful were the opportunities in Northumbria, where Gaelic was a court language. Caedmon lived and sang in an Irish intellectual atmosphere. Aldhelm, the first Anglo-Saxon to write rimed Latin verse in the eighth century, was a pupil of the Irish abbot, Mailduff. So Otfried, who in the ninth century introduced rime into High German, was a pupil of the Irish monks of St. Gall. Later, the assonant rime found in Anglo-Norman poems, and common in the Romance of Oc and related dialects "is clearly the Irish *c̄ mharda*" (correspondence), wrote Guest, "though not submitted in the Romance dialects to the nice rules which regulate its assonances in the Gaelic."<sup>1</sup>

St. Donatus, Bishop of Fiesole in 816, a Latin poet, describes his native country at the beginning of this period:

"Insula dives opum, gemmarum, uestis et auri:  
Commoda corporibus, ære sole solo.

"In qua Scotorum gentes habitare merentur  
Inclyta gens hominum, milite, pace, fide."

To this time belong many historical romances in prose, such as the "Battle of Moyléana," where the "seven

<sup>1</sup> In early French verse sometimes fifteen to fifty lines ended with the same rime, e.g., "La Chanson de Roland." This miserable monotony, found in St. Augustin's simple effort in Latin, was never tolerated in Irish, and disappeared as Irish metric influenced Latin hymns and nascent literatures.

sons of Sigrir" (Sigurd) are mentioned as allies. The Norse are named in many historical tales, but these may, as I have shown, belong to previous ages. Here, however, may possibly be placed the last of the "Three Sorrows of Story," the "Fate of the Children of Tuireann," from which a poem is quoted. In connection with this tale I came upon a very curious coincidence. Thirty years ago John Bright produced a wide effect by a phrase in his speech at Limerick. He said :

"I believe that if the majority of the people of Ireland had their will, and if they had the power, they would unmoor the island from its fastenings in the deep and move it at least 2,000 miles further westward."

Now, in this ancient Irish story, where Balor one of the chiefs of the Fomorian Norse is mentioned, the following passage is found :

"And Balor followed them to the port and he said : 'Give battle to the Ioldanach, and cut off his head : and tie that island which is called Erin to the sterns of your ships and your good barques, and let the dense verging waters take its place, and place it upon the north side of Norway, and not one of the Tuata Dé Danann will ever follow it there.'"<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps, considering how remote is the idea from the possible, a more strange coincidence does not exist in literature. Here the ancient Gaelic bard anticipated a statesman. A little later, an ancient Irish statesman, Cormac, King-Bishop of Cashel, anticipated the central thought of an English poet—Tennyson, expressed in "Crossing the Bar."

<sup>1</sup> O'Curry, "Atlantis," Vol. IV., p. 169. O'Curry gravely adds : "this was an empty boast, as the sequel shows."



Most notable and most interesting, from an historical standpoint, is the Gaelic poem which tells so triumphantly of a Norse expedition—which yet gave “glad good news to Innisfail.” There is nothing in Norse literature, prose or poetry, which so vividly yet so accurately describes a vessel and its equipage. All are Norse and nobles. It is the expedition of a Sea-King and the ships are adorned with silks and coloured cloths, as the Sagas tell us sometimes happened. Though the poem has been only preserved phonetically, its structure indicates the skilled bard, who kept the laws, and knew how to vary his metre :

“Purple wings our ships expand  
O'er the fleckt and flowing wave ;  
Mid the masts the champions stand  
Fit for foray, mild and brave.

“Blue are the seas surrounding,  
Prows o'er the billows bounding ;  
Swords in their sheaths are glowing,  
The lances thrill for throwing.

“Fair are the forms reclining,  
On the cushioned couches high,  
Wives in their beauty shining  
'Neath the chequered canopy.

“Silks in varied fold on fold  
Clothe our King-ship sailing fast :  
Silks of purple splendour hold  
Wells of wind at every mast.”

Though descriptive of a visit by an Irish prince to his comrade-friend, a prince of Norway, the Voyage of Ruad is totally different. Here the voyager finds his ship suddenly stop in mid-sea ; after many vain efforts, he



dives and discovers that it is held by nine fair straight-limbed women. Descending with them to their quiet under-sea abode, he stays for a time, then suddenly departs, pledged to return. Having paid a seven years' visit to Norway he goes back to his native land, breaking his promise. When he has passed the sea-maidens' abode, a murmur is heard following his ship: it is the sound of their pursuing bark of bronze. As his ship touches land the dead body of his son is flung up against the beach from the sea, where their child had been killed by the deserted mother, in fierce revenge.

This is a much more dramatic story than that of the Lorelei—which may, however, have been an Irish tale carried to the Rhine by the Irish Saint Goar whose name still recalls his presence there.<sup>1</sup>

There is a story concerning a little poem of this period which gives it special human interest. Cavalière Nigra, whilst examining the old scholarly manuscripts of St. Gall's, noticed a few lines written on the margin. This was a little lay addressed to a blackbird, which had begun singing when the monk had written so far on the page. That blackbird's song was sung in the year 850, among the Swiss mountains, where the Irish Saint Gall had planted his famous Monastic School. 'Whilst translating these verses,' wrote Signor Nigra,<sup>2</sup> 'I love to imagine the poor monk who, more than a thousand years ago, was copying the manuscript and, taken off for a moment by the song of the blackbird, saw through the casement of his cell the green crown of woods which surrounded his monastery, in Ulster, or in Connaught;

<sup>1</sup> *Rectè*, Guaire.

<sup>2</sup> Tr. from "Reliquie Celtiche," Roma, 1872.

and having heard the quick trilling of the bird he wrote these verses and returned more lightly to his interrupted labours.'

The Irish monks loved nature, and all things animate and inanimate. Two centuries before, King Guaire besought his hermit brother to return, and repose in a couch, not with uneasy head on pine boards. Marban replied by giving a glowing picture of his little hermitage in the forest, "and the natural beauties of water, shrub, tree, beast, and insect that surround him and yield him food and consolation of body and mind. Among his musicians he enumerates the redbreast, the cuckoo, and the 'Ciaran' or beautiful large mottled wild bee"—the cry of wild geese at approach of winter, and the call of the merlehen.<sup>1</sup>

Here we may place the poem on a "Ruined Nest," by some unknown, half-Christian bard, swayed by the storms of love and grief.

Perhaps the most classic poem of this period is Queen Gormlai's noble "Lament for Niall," who was slain in an attack upon the Norse-Irish of Dublin in the year 919. It is original, sincere, passionate, yet restrained. We see her standing beside the open grave, which a monk is filling, whilst a priest stands near to intone the "De Profundis," she exclaims :

"Move, O monk, thy foot away,  
Lift it now from Niall's side—  
Over much thou'st cast the clay  
Where I would, with him, abide."

<sup>1</sup> O'Curry, "Manners and Customs," Vol. III., p. 357. A version of this strangely beautiful poem is given in this (second) edition.

There are few stories in history or romance, so tragic as that of Queen Gormlai, which is told in the Appendix.

Some of the hymns composed in this period will surely attract attention. Of these is the bright little hymn, in six-syllabled verse, of Maelisu, "Holy Spirit of Love." More curious, though not less devotional, is that entitled "Deus Meus," in which he intermingles Latin with Irish lines, as had been done two centuries before by St. Colman, professor at Cork. But I believe that the hymns of one of the distinguished bardic O'Dalys will most appeal to and nearly touch the human heart to-day. They are correct in structure, but far removed from formalism : they are simple, natural, and loving. This is the first verse of one hymn :

"That in Jesu's heart should *be*  
 One like *me* is marvellous ;  
 Sin has made my life a loss  
 But his *Cross* shall speak for us."

This of another :

"Teach thou me, O Trinity !  
 O Lord who *speech* is *sweet*,  
 Teach my tongue, O Trinity !  
 Bless it, with *blessings* meet."

There is a spirit of love in these hymns which must keep them ever new.

The poem of the Four Men over the grave of Alexander the Great is, I think, unique. It displays surprising vigour of conception and boldness of expression, all the more remarkable when we remember that the Gael loved rather to admire than to criticise their

hero—and the heroes of Greece and Rome had long been heroes in Erin. Hear the bard speak :

“Yesterday he hurl'd  
Royal edicts o'er the world,  
Rode the earth from rim to rim—  
Now earth rideth over him !”

The epoch closes with a very singular poem, extracted from a most extraordinary work, entitled “The Vision of Mac Conglinne.” One cannot examine the structure of this curious narrative, without noting its identity, in many respects, with the structure of Rabelais’ work. It seems imperative to suppose that Rabelais had this Irish tale before him, in a Latin or French version. Such versions of Irish tales were not uncommon : many enjoyed a wide popularity. There is another thing noteworthy, for the poem entitled “A Vision of Viands” (given in the original metre, with trisyllabic rimes), manifestly gave origin to some passages in the “Land of Cokayne.” The Abbey, whose walls were pasties, flesh and fish, whose shingles were of flour cake, was originally a Castle. After sailing a sea of milk, the bard came to it :

“Ramparts rose of custard all,  
Where a Castle muster'd all  
Forces o'er the lake :  
Butter was the bridge of it,  
Wheaten meal the ridge of it,  
Bacon every stake.”

It is the earliest example of the mock-heroic poem in (non-classic) European literature.

IX. Four centuries, from the year 1200 to the year 1600,

would almost cover the period between the arrival of the Normans from England and the death of Queen Elizabeth. It was a strange invasion, for the newcomers who besieged the Norse-Celt capital, Dublin, were themselves descendants of the Norse-Celts of Normandy. The time is full of interest. Again the literature of Erin was brought, now forcibly, into contact with that of Britain. French literature was greatly evolving, and the Anglo-Normans had their *trouvères*, *ménéstrels*, *seggers*, and *disours*, but they discovered a new world of beauty in Erin which put all these in the shade. Gerald de Barri, who accompanied Henry II. to Erin, declared that the Irish were incomparably superior to every other nation in instrumental music. His countrymen made a similar discovery with respect to Irish letters. For a little time there seemed some chance of a Hiberno-Norman literature arising; some poems in Norman-French were composed, relating to the sieges of Dublin and Ross, for instance; but the glamour of Erin's ancient civilization was as potent over the Normans as over the Norse. The great nobles soon acquired the language, became Irish Chieftains in practice, with *brehons*, *bards*, *romancists*, and *harpers*. It was the impassioned lay of his bard which, in the sixteenth century, decided the revolt of "Silken" Thomas, Henry VIII.'s Lord Deputy of Ireland.

Celtic literature was not alien to their tastes. Many legends had passed from Ireland, Wales, Brittany, and Cornwall, into Latin and Norman-French. Only twenty years before Henry landed, Bérou had composed, in England, the Norman-French lay of Tristan and Iseult, which of itself would make them familiar with Dublin, where the heroine dwelt. Here her name long abode in

“Isolde’s Tower,” and still abides in Chapel-isod. Morhoul, her brother, was, I consider, the Norman form of Murcad, now pronounced Murha or Murhoo.

There had been nothing till then in English literature to attract them. It gives one a shock to remember that the Anglo-Normans had been thirty-four years in Dublin when Layamon’s “Brut” was completed, and that this represented poetry :

“An preost wes on leoden,  
Layamon wes ihoten :  
He was Leuonadhes sone  
lidhe him beo drihten.”

Even in 1300, Robert of Gloucester wrote explaining that the Normans spoke French, and only the “low men hold to English” :

“Thus come, lo ! Engelond into Normannes honde  
And the Normans ne couthe speke tho bote her owe  
speche,  
And speke French as dude atom, and here children dude  
al so teche,  
So that heymen of thys lond, that of her blode come,  
Holdeth alle thulke speche that hii of them nome,  
Vor bote a man couthe French metolth of him wel lute,  
Ac lowe men holdeth to Englyss and to her kunde speche  
yute.”

The Augustinian hermit, Richard Rolle, who died in 1349, wrote in Northumbrian dialect, and appears to have got some of his ideas directly from the Irish—a loan the more probable because Irish influence had greatly influenced northern England. His description of



heaven in "The Pricke of Conscience" seems a free translation of passages in Bran's "Isle of Delight":

"Ther is lyf without ony deth,  
 And ther is youthe without ony elde;  
 And ther is alle manner welthe to welde;  
 And ther is rest without ony travaille,  
 And ther is pees without ony strife,  
 And ther is alle manner lykinge of lyf:  
 And ther is bright somer ever to se,  
 And ther is never wynter in that countrie."

Parallel passages are given, in footnotes, between Michel of Kildare's "Land of Cokaygne" and their Irish originals. Langland, who died at the close of the fourteenth century, revived alliteration in "Piers the Plowman," but without the rule of ancient art. Chaucer did not arise, and with him English literature, until the latter half of the fourteenth century. Then the spirit of the Norman, the Celt, and the Saxon breathed into the English language, and its true poetry began.

This period is represented in the following collection by poems composed by the Gael in Erinn and in Alba. The first in date, the "Lay of the Harp of Ransom," is by an Irish bard delegated to Scotland to seek the restoration of a prince's harp, given as ransom for the return of another poet. This harp it supposed to be the original of that which was assigned to the Irish escutcheon. The bard personifies it as a maiden:

"Sweet thy full melodious voice,  
 Maid who wast a Monarch's choice."

A singular poem is that of Gerald, fourth Earl of Desmond. It is the production of a Norman, Fitz-



maurice, now become an Irish bard, and there are several more from his pen which had been sedulously preserved in Scotland. It is a satire against women, which was unusual amongst Gaelic bards ; and finally, it is in the metre of the song on Rosalind. Indeed it reminds one of Touchstone's travesty of her lover's verse :

"Sweetest nut has sourest rind,  
Such a nut is Rosalind ;  
He that sweetest rose will find,  
Must find love's prick and Rosalind."

There could be no question of Earl Gerald borrowing from Shakespeare, for the rule of the Desmonds was ended by Elizabeth's confiscation.

Another anticipatory poem is that of a Lennox bard, who antedates Balzac and Kipling by four centuries in his description of the failing power of an artist.

The first Countess of Argyll, Isabel Stuart, a contemporary of Lydgate, contributes a delicate bardic song, "Love Untold." In "A King's Lesson," the reader can observe with what respectful manliness an Irish bard could admonish his monarch, and set forth the principles of sovereign rule amongst the Irish Gael. It will enable us also to make a comparison between this independence and these principles, and the adulation offered to the contemporary English sovereign and the servility desired by her successor. The bard, though his prince had submitted to Elizabeth, was still a power in Clare, and owned, by virtue of his hereditary office, the castle of Dunogan and its appurtenance. His poem was composed just one year before Edmund Spenser made his pitiful plai: t :

“ Full little knowest thou that hast not tried,  
 What hell it is in suing long to bide :

\* \* \* \* \*

To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,  
 To feed on hope, and pine on fear and sorrow :

\* \* \* \* \*

To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,  
 To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.”

Had Spenser been an Irish bard, in even a small principality, he would not have died of starvation, but have lived in high honour, with wealth sufficient to tempt confiscation. He records his admiration of the gallantry of the Irish soldier, the chivalric bearing of the Irish knight—like Sir Thopas—and the poetry of the Irish bard, though he could have little known its curious beauties in a mere prose translation. He made Irish southern scenery famous in his “*Faerie Queene*,” and introduced the Gaelic “*puca*” into English fairydom, as the “*powke*,” which Shakespeare presented as “*Puck*.”

Queen Elizabeth, according to the Venetian Ambassadors, had learned Irish ; she had Irish airs in her “*Virginal Book*” and, according to the Talbot papers, Irish music was all the fashion. It has been pointed out that Shakespeare introduces Irish words in the following passage from “*Henry V.*” Act IV., Sc. 4.

“*French Soldier.* ‘*Je pense que vous estes le gentilhomme de bonne qualité.*’

“*Pistol.* ‘*Quality ! Callino, custure me. Art thou a gentleman ?*’”

This was recognised as the title of an Irish song, by Malone ; Lover made the phrase to be “*Cáilin óg* a

stór," Dr. Whitley Stokes, "Cáilin óg a's truagh." It might be "Cáilin óg a stuaire." The "me" is English and ethical. There is another passage in Shakespeare which has puzzled commentators and which I think can be clearly explained, in a similar way. In "As You Like It," Act II. Sc. 5, Amiens invites those who love the greenwood to "come hither," and again :

"Who doth ambition shun,  
And love to live i' the sun,  
Seeking the food he eats,  
And pleas'd with what he gets  
Come hither, come hither, come hither ;  
Here shall he see  
No enemy  
But winter and rough weather."

Jaques, in derision, says, "I'll give you a verse to this note. . . ."

"If it do come to pass  
That any man turn ass,  
Leaving his wealth and ease,  
A stubborn will to please  
Ducdàme, ducdàme, ducdàme ;  
Here shall he see  
Gross fools as he  
An if he will come to me."

"What is that ducdàme?" asked Amiens, and Jaques mockingly replied, "'Tis a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle."

Amiens' question still remains unanswered. One suggests it comes from the Latin "duc ad me;" another, from the French "douce dame;" another, from the Romany; another, the call of a dame to her ducks!

It is agreed that it must correspond, in some way, to the invitation given by Amiens to "come hither."

Now, there was an Irish ballad current at that time, with a romantic history. Eivlin Cavanagh, the secret Love of a forbidden suitor, was about to be married. Her lover, Carrol O'Daly, disguised as a harper, came to her mansion, and with impassioned song besought her to come with him. "Diuca tu" is the phonetic form of the question, "Wilt thou come?" Her reply, given in a succeeding verse is "Tiucame" (which she repeats<sup>1</sup>) "I will come." Now here we have the invitation and the answer, "a verse to this note." As to calling "fools into a circle," which has been made a mystery, it plainly refers to the circle of hearers who assemble round the wandering minstrel. It may be added that another line of this poem has had a world-wide popularity. It is that in which the bard pours out his delight: "Cead milé fáilté romat"—"a hundred thousand welcomes to thee."

X. It seems a strange paradox to say that the Irish

<sup>1</sup> A version of this simple passionate song is supplied in this (second) edition. The lover's words phonetically given are: "Tiuca tu no wani tu?" "Wilt thou come or wilt thou stay?" The lady's assent, thrice given, "I'll come, I will not stay," sounds thus:

Tiucame is ni wani me,  
Tiucame is ni wani me,  
Tiucame is ni wani me!

This would catch the attention of hearers. In support of this, it should be mentioned (as noted by Mr. Grattan Flood, in "History of Irish Music," and by Mr. T. F. Lawrence in his "Shakespeare in Ireland") that Shakespeare also introduces "A Hundred Thousand Welcomes" in one of his plays.

suffered most under the sway of kindred rulers. They had been ever a most friendly nation (“*natio amicissima*”) in the eyes of the Anglo-Saxons, who helped to fill their great schools, and whose college in Mayo caused that place to be called Mayo of the Saxons. It was to Dublin Earl Godwin’s sons fled for refuge. Of the relations of the Gael with Norsemen and Normans sufficient has been said. The Norman kings of England left their national life practically as it had been. Their days of disaster began when the kindred Cymric Tudors assumed power, and their ruin seemed completed under the Celtic Stuarts.

Our last literary period begins with the year 1600, shortly before the accession of James I. Up to this time, the Pale has been a small fraction of the island, so far as language and letters were concerned. It lay outside the genuine intellectual life of the land, which went on, with great interruptions no doubt, as before. Even in the year 1604, a Contention of the Bards showed their spirit lived, the great Annals were compiled, good works written, and Schools of Ancient Learning were maintained. But in 1627 Conell Ma Geoghegan wrote that many, whose profession it was to keep the chronicles, could no longer obtain respect and profit by their profession, and set their children to learn English. They neglected their books, and some even sold them as vellum to tailors to be cut in strips—a worse misdeed than the alleged “drowning” of books by Norsemen.

Yet five years later “The Annals of the Four Masters” were begun, and in four years completed, 1636. Thirty years later, Mac Firbis had concluded his well-known “Book of Genealogies,” and fortunately came

into friendly relations with an erudite Palesman, Sir James Ware. But "the war of chicane followed the war of the sword," as Edmund Burke says, and was more fatal. The enforced flight of the northern earls of Tyrone and Tirconnell, and the plantation of their fertile lands by alien peasants, and plotting owners, careless of culture, paralyzed the intellect for the time and place. There was little light of home during the perfidious reign of Charles I., or the Egyptian rule of Cromwell.<sup>1</sup> If a brief glimmer followed, it closed in the darker night of the penal code of William and Anne, which was an effort made to annihilate the intellect of a nation that had generously fostered the development of all other peoples, and liberally enlightened the world.

Hence it is not surprising there should be a note of deeper sorrow heard. Yet the literature of the period is wonderfully diversified, and it is not the Gael only who mourn. Many bards bear foreign names. Their fathers had crossed with the Normans, or with later settlers, yet they claimed the country's history as their heritage, and they make appeal to all its ancient traditions. So every generation fuses with the great Past, in the adopted land they love. A Norman Nugent feels the pang of exile as keenly as an O'Neill. A singular illustration of this comingling of race is illustrated in connection with the Dirge of Oliver Grace. He was a descendant of Raymond le Gros; the bard who laments him in Gaelic is of

<sup>1</sup> A dainty Cavalier-poem by Piers Ferriter, executed by the Cromwellians at Killarney, in 1653, shows that the general character of the seventeenth century influenced also Irish bards. It is called "Lay thine arms aside, young maid," and is given in this (new) edition.



Welsh extraction, yet no dirge is more completely representative of the Irish characteristics and superstitions, as now understood.

The fine poem on "The Desolation" is by Mac Marcuis, whose name betrays his foreign race, yet his spirit is Irish of the Irish. Clarence Mangan gave a beautiful paraphrase of Mac an Baird's (or Mac Ward's) lament for the northern chieftains, dead at Rome, which begins "O Woman of the piercing Wail." In the elegy for Eogan Rua O'Neill, whose chivalrous and romantic life has been told so well by Mr. J. F. Taylor, Q.C., there are only the simple accents of the untutored heart.

The penal code of William and Anne which forbade education to the Irish people should have suppressed all literary expression. If anything could have made them a nation of illiterate boors, this should. But the soul is stronger than statutes. The penal code seems to have caused the whole island to blossom into music and song. Under it flourished those fine minstrels, O'Connellan and O'Carolan, who gave some of its most delightful airs to the country. Abroad, the Irish officers, highly distinguished in the armies of Spain, France, Austria, and even of Russia, created colleges for their kindred and countrymen. Many Irish manuscripts were saved by exiled students, and some are still to be found in foreign libraries,—a pathetic parallel to the flight of Greek scholars, in earlier days.

The eighteenth century abounded in minor bards, some of whose lays are very wells of poetry. Impassioned and refined, with words modulated to music, they offer a great variety of verse forms. They retain the euphonious



vowel end-rime, alliteration sometimes, and not infrequently internal rime. Sometimes feats of force are accomplished. The old alphabetical form, where each stanza began with a letter of the alphabet (as in "A solis ortus" of Sedulius), was adopted and excelled. For, at times, the Gaelic bard would make each word in the line—nay, every word in a stanza—begin with the same initial. Another initial had currency in the next verse, and so on. Then, there were interwoven rimes. Again, each word of one line rimed to the word above it, in the preceding line. Such playing with rime, and such mastery over it are only discoverable in mediæval latinity, and the resemblance is so close and exceptional as to prove relationship. The Irish monks of a previous epoch had set the ball rolling—parallels may be found in Irish modern verse (not of course in the same metre) for such riming arrangements as these of Everhardus :<sup>1</sup>

"Virgo beata salusque parata benigna precanti  
Dona rogata dabis cumulata tibi fabulanti."

Also for these—*adonici alterne relati* :

"Theca pudoris virgo decoris gemma valoris  
Omnibus horis es decus oris stella nitoris."

<sup>1</sup> Clement Marot, O. de Saint-Gelais appear to have imitated such latinists in their verses which show "rime annexée," "rime batelée," "rime brisée," "rime couronnée," "rime enchainée," "rime en echo," &c. This affiliation has not hitherto been noticed. The "rime batelée" gives a common Irish form—inlaid alternate rime—as this from Marot shows :

Amy de nom, de pensée et de *faict*,  
Qu'ay-je mes*faict*, qui vers moy ne prens voye ?

For these, where the entire word-series of one line rimes with that of the next :—*Rhythmici retrogradi singulis relati* :

“ Doctorum documen diversorum superasti,  
Multorum nocumen tormentorum tolerasti.”

Even for these where all the words rime together—*Rhythmici retrogradi undique relati* :—a most difficult form :

“ Plura precatūra, pura cura valitura,  
Cura mansura, procura jura futura.”

Some modern Irish bards went still further. In Latin, such efforts fatigue the ear, because there is no variation : the consonants riming as well as the vowels. In Irish, vowel-rime sufficing, there was variety of consonants with increased power of phrasing. Sometimes, then, the poet would run one stanza on two vowel sounds—and then another on two other sounds—still maintaining perfect sense. The Munster poets were especially given to this mellifluous mode, nothing could well be more melodious than their verse, nothing more impossible to render completely into English.

Some of the recent poetry of Mr. Swinburne, with its happy alliteration and melodious flow recalls on a loftier level the musical manner of these later Gael. Tennyson, who effected a revival of interest in ancient British literature, was attracted by that of Ireland. He gave it the homage of a remarkable poem, and set an example which other men of genius, strong enough to enter fresh woods, will surely follow. But long before this poem, his mode of expression was, occasionally, curiously like that of the

Gael. Thus, in his early poems, he is fond of compound adjectives: "clear-pointed flame," "low-cowering," "fair-fronted." This was an Irish characteristic. In the Battle of Moyléana, for instance, we find "fierce-fronted, sportive-topped billows." It was a favourite figure with recent Irish bards to describe a maiden as a "blossom of the Apple-tree"—"Bright flower of the fragrant apple." Tennyson, in "The Brook," sings of the "fresh apple-blossom." There is a lyric given in Hardiman's *Minstrelsy*, where the lover, having waited lonely and long for his beloved, exclaims: "Arise, O bright Sun, give forth the light of day and disperse my clouds, afar." Does not this suggest:

"Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls  
To the flowers, and be their sun"?

At her coming tread, her lover's heart' would hear her  
and beat, had it lain for a century dead.

So also, the blind bard O'Hearnain, were he laid in the tomb, would awake, hear, and arise, did the Voice of Freedom sound above his grave. Then Tennyson's poem "Crossing the Bar" embodies the central thought of the King-bishop of Cashel's pilot poem.

There is, I think, conclusive proof that Tennyson read what had been translated of Irish verse, and derived a few suggestions from it. There is a poem in Hardiman's work (published in 1831) which contains these lines of eulogy on John McDonnell the bard. He was

"A druid, in whose mind her honey-dew  
As in a comb did science richly store."

Tennyson wrote in "Edwin Morris" (1856)

"Was he not  
A full-celled honey-comb of eloquence  
Stored of all flowers?"

The metaphor is the same: the verb "store" is repeated, so that this cannot be a chance coincidence. Strangely enough the English poet represents the Irish bard's metaphor more exactly than the translator: for the literal version is "A sage, and a honeycomb of knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Alfred Austin in "The Door of Humility" has a verse after the Irish form with inlaid rimes:

"With tranquil purpose, fervent *mind*,  
Foster, while you abide on earth,  
And humbly offer to your *kind*  
The gift assigned to you at birth."

XI. The Irish lyrical poetry of the eighteenth century may be conveniently divided into the patriotic or political and that expressive of the more domestic affections.

The former may be fitly introduced by a poem of passionate love: "The Fair Hills of Eiré." It was written in exile, on the dull shores of the Elbe, and never was the devotion of an exile more ardently expressed. Versions of it have been given by Sir Samuel

<sup>1</sup> Among the more curious anticipations of the latter-day Gael is the "Parliament na m-ban," or "Parliament of Women," which displays in actual work that which is scarcely yet even a dream to the advanced advocates of Women's Rights.

Ferguson and Clarence Mangan, and none would be presented here, were it not that the former had but a fragment of the poem. His noble rendering almost makes it complete. Neither version, however, gives the exact measure and internal rime of the original, which are of literary interest :

“Behold, in the valley, cress and berries bland,  
Where streams love to dally, in that wondrous land,  
While the great river-voices roll their music grand  
Round the Fair Hills of Eiré, O !”

Specimens of Jacobite songs follow. In times when great national events strike away the customary or conventional surroundings, man's mind stands naked, unarmed, subject anew to the influences of the invisible. “Her young men shall see visions, and her old men shall dream dreams.” Was it because the Irish bards saw visions, and could take refuge in a more ethereal world from hard realities, that the tone of Irish Jacobite poetry is so buoyant? Spirits came to comfort them in the days of desolation. Under branches of flowers, in a wood, appeared the Goddess of Song, to her despairing votary :

“My heart beat with rapture and brightened  
My soul to that Sprite from above,  
The smile from her blue eyes that lightened  
Sent my bosom a-thrilling with love.  
O berry-red cheeks !—and O cluster  
Of curling gold hair to the knee !  
I could gaze the whole night on your lustre,  
And the night seems a minute to me.”

Or Erinn herself comes radiant upon the waters, but pale with sorrow :

“Lo, all the splendour of sunshine dancing  
Through snowy lilies her cheeks upon.”

When the bard gave her tidings of future triumph :

“Her sorrows fled—she struck the golden  
High-ringing harp with her snowy hand,  
And poured in music, the regal, olden,  
The lofty lays of a free-made Land ;  
The birds, the brooks, and the breeze seemed springing  
From grief to gladness that sunny dawn,  
And all the woods with delight were ringing  
So sweet her singing for *Buahil Bawn* !”

Or she comes, for her name is banned, in disguise as “Shiela gal ni Connollan,” or as “Grannia Wael,” as “Katleen ni h-Ulahan,” or as “Dark Rosaleen.” Always the fairest of the fair, the most beautiful being on earth, the most beloved of all the world. This theme was put to almost every tune, so that every air sang her praise. In these poems, the Stuart Prince was a subsidiary personage, the agent of Erin’s deliverance. There are other lays, though few, which show a personal affection, as “Over the Hills and Far Away,” and “Health to the Chief.”

In form these are remarkable contrasts to the older poetry, and probably the most noticeable in that respect is the “Cruiskeen Laun.” This is the oldest and only Irish song of the name which I know. It is political ; the drinking-song was written within the English-speaking Pale.

Nothing reveals the feelings of the people so faithfully as its poetry. When their chieftains, nobles, and friends were driven to foreign lands,—there rising by merit to

honours—the persecuted remnant of Ireland looked abroad for redemption. At home, strangers ruled in every parish over the confiscated lands, and recreants advanced themselves to wealth and dignities upon the wreck of honour. Apart, the remnant of the bards sang, sorrowed, predicted, and satirized.

It surprises one at first to find they took little or no note of the patriots in the Irish Parliament. These seemed still all strangers, or renegades; they were not yet fused, though in process of fusion, and now creating a new Irish literature in English.

There are fewer Gaelic ballads in connection with the insurrection of Ninety Eight than one might expect. Some of them are simple peasant verses: others, like "The Slight Red Steed," show mystic faculty. This Republican movement originated in the Anglo-Irish Pale (the Lowlands of Ireland), and was sung in English. It extended to the Gael, and mingled both peoples in suffering, but the Southerners, from whose kindred chiefly the Irish Brigade in France was recruited, were still mostly Royalist at heart.

XII. In the second section of the poetry of the Penal Days—the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—are grouped a number of songs of the Affections, Elegies, short epigrammatic verses, &c. The three Elegies given are classic in form. One deplores the death of O'Carolan, the famous minstrel; and the bard, with the old devotional boldness, bids the Saints

"Give welcome to Toralach's spirit  
Your ramparts among,—  
And the voice of his harp ye shall hear it,  
With glorious song."



The second is by a bard, Felim McCarthy, who, driven by persecution into the mountain wilderness, discovered, one fatal morning, that all his four children had been killed. I know of nothing which depicts, with such intense feeling, the anguish of a parent's heart, not expressed in wailing, but deepened in expression by its reserve, and its contrast with remembered hopes. Then comes that mystic power which grief gives the Gael, breaking down the bounds of the invisible. He sees his lost children stretching their hands to him in the night-time :

“In husht midnight of heavy sleeping,  
When I am watching, sobbing, weeping,  
My children glide before my woe—  
Seeking that I should with them go.

I see them in the night-time ever,  
From me in no place do they sever,  
At home, abroad, still near are they,  
Till I go with them to the clay.”

Callanan has given an excellent version of this poem ; but it lacks some stanzas, and is not quite close to the metre. The third elegy, by a bard of the Gael on the descendant of a Norseman, shows Conaclone ; here the last words of each stanza begin the succeeding stanza, and the last words of the entire poem are a repetition of its first. Though nearly two centuries later than that on Eoghan Rua, it is more classic in form, because composed by a skilled bard.

Love-songs in Irish literature date from the days of Fand and Deirdré. Here we have some which were composed during the last two centuries. They are chiefly Southern songs, some of which were published

many years ago, in a small volume, long out of print. Several are anonymous, and may be found North and South. Munster, Leinster, and Ulster have produced many others, finely translated by Callanan, Ferguson, Mangan, and Walsh—this must be remembered when reading Dr. Douglas Hyde's fascinating book, "The Love Songs of Connaught," itself an "Island of all Delight."

These songs show great diversity in metre, rime, and mood. The pliancy of the language is proved by the ease with which it may be adapted to the most varied airs, and its open vowels and soft sounds make it welcome to vocalists as Italian. The lines may now be long, as in the "Dark Girl of the Glen," or in "A Far Farewell":

"Ah, many a wild and watery way, and many a ridge of  
foam  
Keep far apart my lonely heart and the maid I love at  
home;"

and:

"If you go from me, Vourneen, safe may you depart.  
Within my bosom, I feel it, you've killed my very heart.  
No arm can swim, no boat can row, no bark can mariner  
guide  
O'er the waves of that Woeful Ocean that our two lives  
divide."

They may be but four syllables in length, as in the "Dells of Orrerie," to suit a lighter mood, or varied, long and short, thus:

"There's a maiden fair to see,  
A fair maid known to me,  
With tresses bright  
With looks of light,  
All gladsome grace is she."

In "Doreen Le Poer" the lines are shorter yet, being constructed of five and three syllables. This is the verse-structure of "Since Celia's my Foe," which sings to "The Irish Air" preserved in "Queen Elizabeth's" Virginal Book. Hence this verse-form must date back to the sixteenth century: perhaps farther. It would, therefore, be erroneous to infer that the other verse-forms are recent, merely because they may not be preserved in old and grave manuscripts. Here, too, are instances of "re-narration," such as lecturers expounded in their Commentaries on Dallan :

" 'Tis delight unto the earth, when thy little feet press it,  
'Tis delight unto the earth when thy sweet singings  
bless it."

Often several lines of equal length are followed by a shorter line, as in the antique "Envoys" :

" Her lovely face would fill with light  
The darkest dell of the misty South,—  
And sweeter a kiss from her little mouth  
Than all the honey of Erinn."

Or, inversely, one long line may follow short lines :

" Her mind is a dove,  
And the wit of my love  
Is more supple and swift than a bird on the wing."

These Irish bards always placed beauty of mind above bodily beauty ; this is shown even in the little simple song, "Birds on a Bough." They did not fail, in due

times, to extol the maiden's skill in embroidery, painting, and song—which gives a glimpse into brighter homes, and at more accomplished people than one would think possible, under the Penal *régime*. They were, however, in constant contact with the culture of the Continent, where they had many colleges. They were superior to most of the settlers, but some of these, bearing such names as “Inglis” (or English) and “Conway,” became skilful bards.

There are not wanting examples of “*vers de société*,” madrigals, light verses of praise, compliment or raillery, which were popular in that age. Behind these, more simple in structure, are passionate peasant heart-poems by unknown authors. There, for instance, is the weird, dramatic ballad of “*Mauria ni Millone*,” with its unexpected and tragic conclusion.

The natural simplicity of the strain allows the heart to speak with undisguised earnestness, as in this verse of a forsaken maid :

“You promised me purely  
 You'd love me while green grasses grew ;  
 You promised me surely  
 One home between me, Love, and you.  
 My woe to that even  
 When I gave you my heart that was free ;  
 O black, O bitter grieving !  
 The World's between you, Love, and me.”

The apposition between the home shared between them and the world interposed between them makes a marked contrast. In another poem, “*Death's Visit*,” the forlorn maid reminds her lover of his broken

promise, sends to him as her envoy the Most High, yet concludes :

“You’ve broke death’s wall before me,  
The grave’s cold breath blows o’er me,—  
Yet, take one kiss, my darling ;  
Before you leave me so.”

But of all love poems, that of O’Curnain, entitled “Love’s Despair,” appears to me the most intense and impassioned. It is one of the latest as regards date, being of the nineteenth century ; the author is said to have been of low estate, but his desperate emotion gives the poem a rare elevation of thought and dignity of diction. It should be read in its entirety. Nothing but the hand that wounded him can heal the desolation of his life :

“I know not night from day,  
Nor thrush from cuckoo gray,  
Nor cloud from the sun that shines above thee :  
Nor freezing cold from heat,  
Nor friend—if friend I meet—  
I but know—heart’s love!—I love thee.

“Love that my life began,  
Love that will close life’s span,  
Love that grows ever by love-giving :  
Love from the first to last,  
Love, till all life be past,  
Love that loves on after living.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Bear all things evidence  
Thou art my very sense,  
My past, my present, and my morrow.  
All else on earth is crost,  
All in the world is lost—  
Lost all—but the great love-gift of sorrow.”

XIII. The final group comprises lullabies and songs of occupation. These are always of interest, for they open the inner doors, and admit us to the hearth. How old are they? Possibly Spinners' Songs, like these, were sung by the maidens in the youth of the world: in the women's chamber of Amergin's household, the girl-children may have rimed to the line:

"Oro, O darling fair, O lamb, and O love!"

The lullabies are three, differing strangely. One is the crooning song of a happy mother to her babe, whom she would put to sleep:

"On sunniest day of the pleasant summer,  
Your golden cradle on smooth lawn laying  
'Neath murmuring boughs that the birds are swaying."

The second, the "Fairy Lullaby," is the song of a most unhappy mother, who had been borne away by the invisible creatures to their fortress in the green hill. Her duty is to nurse children in the fairy kingdom, whilst her own child is forsaken. Now, on the eve of the last day when deliverance is yet possible, she chants her message to another woman (whilst anxiously hushing to sleep the fairy babe), that she may reveal the means of deliverance. This is a dramatic conception. Nor must it be taken as a mere poetic fancy: the deep conviction of the reality of such scenes has been fatally illustrated within the past few years.

Next comes a gently humorous Baby-song by a father, and several songs of occupation—Smiths' and quaint Spinners' songs follow. The collection is con-

cluded by a boat-song, the language of which is older than much of the later verse, but cannot be very ancient on account of a reference to the Indies. The original imparts a sense of vehemence, buoyancy, and wave-tumult. The author, whoever he was, loved the sea. Is not this a bright picture?—

“With robes from the Indies I dighted my fair,  
 How swells her white bosom against the blue air!  
 Right buoyant the craft below, shapely the sail,  
 O God, but to see her rise out of the gale  
     On the high, bright tide! the high, bright tide!  
     Queen of my heart, my joy, my pride!  
     My beautiful bark on the high, bright tide!”

Accepting a suggestion of Mr. Alfred Perceval Graves, who has done so much for Irish literature, I have added two paraphrases, “The King’s Lay” and “The Blessing of Dublin”; the former had the advantage of coming under the notice of Matthew Arnold, and the privilege of his approval.

This concludes a series which cannot be regarded as in any sense complete; but it will add something to what has been already accomplished, and may induce other and better qualified workers to do more. It stands as the first attempt to present an Irish anthology of translated song, on an historical basis.

The subject is one affecting many interests. How can the historian write of a nation if he know nothing of its culture? How can the novelist revive its past, if deaf to its harmonies and blind to its picturesque colouring? How can the statesman comprehend its spirit, the educationist develop its mental forces, the



patriot feel and guide its higher instincts, if they be ignorant of its inherited powers and aptitudes?

To the student of European literature it is essential to know the literature of a nation which, when Rome had fallen, held the literary sceptre of Europe for three centuries. That nation imparted its higher culture and methods to the Norse, the Anglo-Saxons, the Germans, the French, and the Spanish, directly or indirectly, in varying degrees. Their earliest essays in verse, for all its crudeness, bear true traces of the ancient master minds which created, organised, and taught the verse-system of the modern world.

In so far, it may be stated that Ancient Ireland was the Mother of Literatures.



# I.—LAYS OF MILESIAN INVADERS

## THE INCANTATION<sup>1</sup>

### AMERGIN

FAIN we ask Erinn,  
Faring o'er ocean's  
Motions to mountains,  
Fountains and bowers,  
Showers, rills rushing,  
Gushing waves welling,  
Swelling streams calling,  
Falling foam-thunder,  
Under lakes filling :  
Willing—(abiding  
Riding rounds, holding  
Olden fairs meetly)—  
Fleet to lift loyal  
Royal king's towers,<sup>2</sup>  
Bowers for crowning ;  
Frowning foes over—

<sup>1</sup> When the Milesians, on the second occasion, had approached the shores of Erinn, they were driven back by a strange magic wind. Amergin, their poet-druid and judge, then made this incantation.

<sup>2</sup> At Tara.

Rover Mil's warlike  
 Starlike sons therein.  
 Erinn shall longer,  
 Stronger, show honour,  
 On our Milesians.—  
 Wishing, in trouble,  
 Noble isle's wooing,  
 Suing, we stay here ;—  
 Pray here to sail in,  
 Wailing maids royal !  
 Loyal chief-leaders,  
 Pleaders, blend pray'r in.  
 So we seek Erinn—

### FIRST TRIUMPH-SONG <sup>1</sup>

#### AMERGIN

I, THE Wind at Sea,  
 I, the rolling Billow,  
 I, the roar of Ocean,  
 I, the seven Cohorts,  
 I, the Ox upholding,  
 I, the rock-borne Osprey,

<sup>1</sup> When Amergin of the Fair Knee first placed his right foot on the land of Erinn he composed this song, in Rosg metre. See Appendix. This poem gives the first example of blank verse.

I, the flash of Sunlight,  
I, the Ray in Mazes,  
I, the rushing Wild Boar,  
I, the river-Salmon,  
I, the Lake o'er plains,  
I, the Strength of Song.  
I, the Spear for smiting Foemen,  
I, the God for forming Fortune !  
Whither wend by glen or mountain ?  
Whither tend beneath the Sunset ?  
Whither wander seeking safety ?  
    Who can lead to falling waters ?  
    Who can tell the white Moon's ages ?  
    Who can draw the deep sea fishes ?  
    Who can show the fire-top headlands ?  
I, the poet, prophet, pray'rful,  
Weapons wield for warriors' slaying :  
Tell of triumph, laud forthcoming  
Future fame in soaring story !

## THE FIRST ELEGY

LUGAI, SON OF ITH<sup>1</sup>

SATE we sole, in cliff-bower—  
 Chill winds shower—  
 I tremble yet—shock of dread  
 Sped death's power.  
 The tale I tell : fate has felled  
 Fáil most fine.

She a man, bare, beheld,  
 In sun shine,  
 Shock of death, death's dread power,  
 Lowered fell fate,  
 Bare I came, hence her shame,  
 Stilled she sate.

<sup>1</sup> The wife of Lugai, nephew of Milesius, saw her husband naked, whilst bathing, and died of shame, thinking him a stranger. He composed her death-song, which was the first elegy ever composed in Erin by a Milesian.

The metre and rime-sounds of the original are reproduced in the English version. See Appendix.

## II.—THE CUCHULAINN PERIOD

### FAND'S WELCOME TO CUCHULAINN<sup>1</sup>

STATELY stands the Charioteer,  
Beardless, young, who hasteth here ;  
Splendid o'er the plain he speeds  
His careering chariot steeds !

Not to him soft strains are good,  
Riding, red with battle blood ;  
Than loud car that rushing reels  
Louder whirr his whirling wheels.

At sight of those steeds, fleeing,  
I stand still, silent, seeing :  
Never hoofs like these shall ring  
Rapid as the winds of Spring !

<sup>1</sup> Cuchulainn, allured by fairy power, went to the mystic Isle of Emain ; there he assisted Labraid, "quick hand at sword," to overthrow his enemies. Then coming in his chariot, victorious, to the mansion of fair Fand, the princess who loved him, she welcomed his approach in this lay. From "The Sick-bed of Cuchulainn and only jealousy of Emer."—O'Curry, "Atlantis," Vols. I, II. See Appendix.



Fifty apples of fair gold  
 Glitter o'er his mantle's fold ;  
 Never king, on sea or strand,  
 Won their like, by battle brand.

On his cheeks four dimples be :  
 One is gray as shallow sea,  
 One purple pale, one like blood,  
 Brown is one as forest flood.

In his eyes shine seven rays,  
 Not forgot in poet's praise ;  
 Brown his eye-brows' noble track,  
 Long his lashes, chafer black.

His high head, what head so good ?—  
 Erinn knows it, hill and wood—  
 Doth three waves of colour hold,  
 Brown, blood-red, and crowning gold.<sup>1</sup>

Crimsoned is his cleaving blade,  
 Bright the hilt of silver made ;  
 Golden bosses gem the shield  
 White-rimmed, radiant o'er the field !

Foremost he in van of war,  
 Flashing first where dangers are :  
 There is none who bears a brand  
 Can with true Cuchulainn stand.

<sup>1</sup> This is taken (in the translation) from the description in the "Táin Bo," where Cuchulainn is said to have three chevelures : "Brown at the skin of the head, blood-red in the middle, a diadem of yellow-gold at the surface."—O'Curry.

Cuchulainn comes to greet us!  
 Murtemni's chief to meet us!—  
 They who bring him from afar  
 Daughters of Aed Abrat are.

Blood drips from his lofty lance,  
 In his glance gleams battle fire;  
 Haughty, high, the victor goes  
 Woe to those who wake his ire.<sup>1</sup>

### LIBAN'S SONG.

WELCOME Cuchulainn,  
 Dawn of Deliv'rance,  
 Proud prince of Murtemni's plain,  
 Mind noble and great,  
 Chieftain victorious,  
 Heart of Honour,  
 Strong Stone of Valour,  
 In battle-wrath glorious,  
 Guide of courage in Ulad.  
 All beauty arrayed in,  
 Light on the eyes of each maiden  
 Welcome!  
 Welcome, Cuchulainn!

<sup>1</sup> The metre of the original is reproduced: it changes in the last verse. "Liban's Song" is rhythmic blank verse, known as "Rosg."

FAND'S FAREWELL TO CUCHULAINN <sup>1</sup>

I IT is who shall depart,  
 Though I leave with heavy heart ;  
 Though a hero waits me, fain,  
 Rather would I here remain !

Rather would I linger here,  
 Happy serving thee, and near ;  
 Than, though strange to thee it seem,  
 Rule Aed's court of sunny beam.

Emer, thine be this man still,  
 Thou shalt garner at thy will ;  
 What my hand reach not, no less  
 Am I bound in wish to bless.

Many men for me have sued,  
 Sought in court, in secret woo'd,  
 Never one have I come nigh  
 For my path lay pure and high.

Woe to one whose love has gone,  
 And finds naught to rest upon ;  
 Better who rejected roves  
 Than be loved not as one loves.

<sup>1</sup> Emer, Cuchulainn's mortal spouse, came upon the lovers with fifty maidens armed with knives to slay Fand. Cuchulainn pledged her protection ; but on hearing Emer's pathetic plea, he consoled her, declaring she should always be pleasing to him. Fand could not bear a divided love, and asked to be rejected. Emer also asked, but Fand persisted, and, falling into great grief, departed when she had spoken this lay. See Appendix.

CUCHULAINN'S APPEAL TO FERDIAD<sup>1</sup>

COME not here, nor helmet don,  
 O Ferdiad, Daman's son ;  
 Worst for thee will be the blow,  
 Though it bring a world of woe.

Come not here, with wrongful strife,  
 My hands hold thy last of life ;  
 Why hast not bethought thee well  
 How my mighty foemen fell ?

Art not bought with weapons bright,  
 Purple belt, and armour light ?<sup>2</sup>  
 She for whom thy weapons shine  
 Shall not, Daman's son, be thine.

Mave's fair daughter, Findabar,  
 Brilliant though her beauties are,

<sup>1</sup> From the "Táin Bo Cuailgné." Cuchulainn was defending the frontier of Ulster against the aggression of Queen Mave of Connacht and her allies. He had defeated her foremost champions. At last, by threat of satire, taunt, and praise, she induced his fellow pupil, fellow champion, and plighted friend, Ferdiad, to undertake her cause and attack Cuchulainn, guaranteeing great rewards, including arms, armour, large estates, and her beautiful daughter, Findabar. When Ferdiad appeared Cuchulainn appealed to him, as Damon might have appealed to Pythias had he come as a foe.

<sup>2</sup> A curious anticipation of Browning's reproach to Wordsworth :

"'Twas just for a handful of silver he left us,  
 Just for a ribbon to stick in his coat."

Though her form has ev'ry grace,  
Her thou never shalt embrace.

King's daughter is Findabar,  
Pledged to thee for price of war ;  
Pledged to other chiefs was she,  
Whom she led to death, like thee.

Break our vow of peace not here,  
Break not friendship, long and dear ;  
Break not thou thy plighted word,  
Come not hither, with the sword.

They have pledged the peerless maid  
Fifty times for battle aid ;  
Fifty times fit meed I gave  
Ev'ry champion found a grave.

Who than Ferbeth was more proud ?  
Heroes used his court to crowd ;  
His high rage was soon brought low,  
Him I slew with but a blow.

Daré, too, how rude his fate !  
Loved by maids of high estate ;  
Fame afar his name had told,  
His robe glowed with threaded gold.

Should she be mine, on whom smiles  
All the isle's most valiant youth,—  
I would crimson not *thy* breast  
East or West, or North or South !

CUCHULAINN LAMENTS FERDIAD<sup>1</sup>

PLAY was each, pleasure each,  
 Till Ferdiad faced the beach ;  
 One had been our student life,  
 One in strife of school our place,  
 One our gentle teacher's grace  
     Loved o'er all and each.

Play was each, pleasure each,  
 Till Ferdiad faced the beach ;  
 One had been our wonted ways,  
 One the praise for feat of fields,  
 Scatach gave two victor shields  
     Equal prize to each.

Play was each, pleasure each,  
 Till Ferdiad faced the beach ;  
 Dear that pillar of pure gold  
 Who fell cold beside the ford.  
 Hosts of heroes felt his sword  
     First in battle's breach.

<sup>1</sup> From the "Táin Bo Cuailgné." In the Fight at the Ford, after mighty deeds, Ferdiad at last is slain. Cuchulainn, grievously wounded, bewails his friend. His charioteer at last beseeches him to leave ; he consents, declaring that each contest and each combat which he had waged before was play and pleasure compared to this battle with Ferdiad. Then he speaks this lay. The original metre is reproduced. It will be observed that iterated or burthen lines appear in this poem, which was probably composed before the sixth century.

Play was each, pleasure each,  
 Till Ferdiad faced the beach ;  
 Lion fiery, fierce, and bright,  
 Wave whose might no thing withstands,  
 Sweeping, with the shrinking sands,  
     Horror o'er the beach.

Play was each, pleasure each,  
 Till Ferdiad faced the beach ;  
 Loved Ferdiad, dear to me :  
 I shall dree his death for aye  
 Yesterday a Mountain he,—  
     But a Shade to-day.

### QUEEN MAVE'S ENVOYS<sup>1</sup>

#### QUEEN

“COME ye home with honour,  
 Envoys to King Conor ;  
     How fared ye afar ?  
 Doth Emania stay him ?  
 Do its feasts delay him ?  
 Fears he that we slay him ?  
     Comes he wild for war ? ”

<sup>1</sup> From “The Battle of Ros-na-rec,” translated by Rev. Professor Hogan, S. J. Todd, Lecture Series, 1895. The saga seems redacted after the Norse invasion, but the poem may be much more ancient, and date from pre-Christian times. The metre and rime are reproduced, and show a curious similarity to Moore’s “Go where Glory Waits thee,” as pointed out by F. Hogan and T. O’N. Russell.



## ENVOYS

“Ulster is not sitting,  
 Feasting were not fitting,  
     Foes they face at Brea :  
 They will never sunder  
 Till they take their plunder,  
 Till they reach like thunder  
     Cairbré and the sea.”

## QUEEN

“They shall flee and fear us,  
 If they venture near us,  
     How their heads shall fall !  
 If that man <sup>1</sup> advances,  
 Strong are Leinster’s lances,  
 I disdain his glances,  
     Stir I not at all.”

## ENVOYS

“Great our champions’ story  
 If they share the glory,  
 Weapons shall be gory  
     Red on Ros-na-ree.”

## QUEEN

“Here, if come King Conor,  
 Back shall turn his banner,  
 Low shall lie his honour,  
     Vanquished shall he be.”

<sup>1</sup> Her divorced husband, Concoibar.

DEIRDRE'S FAREWELL TO ALBA <sup>1</sup>

"And Deirdré looked back at the shores of Alba, and she said : 'My love to thee, O land in the east, and 'tis ill for me to leave thee, for delightful are thy coves and havens, thy kind soft flowery fields, thy pleasant green-sided hills, and little was our need for departing,' and she said this lay" :

LOVELY Land, yon eastern Land !  
Alba of the wondrous strand !  
I had not come from her, now,  
Came I not in Naisi's prow.

Dear is Dunfi, Dunfinn dear,  
Dear the high Dun <sup>2</sup> rising near :  
Dear is Draina, in the sea,  
Suivni's Dun is dear to me.

Cuan Wood !  
Where, alas ! oft Ainli stood.  
Short to me appeared the time  
With Naisi, in Alba's clime.

Glen Lay !  
Where I used sleep happily.  
Prime of badger, fish, and deer,  
Were my cheer still in Glen Lay.

<sup>1</sup> From "The Fate of the Children of Usnach," one of "The Three Sorrows of Story." See Appendix. Alba is the Gaelic name of Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> Dun (pronounced Dun or Doon), an ancient fort.

Glen Massin !  
Fair the ferns, green the grass in !  
We slept with moving pillows  
On billows in Glen Massin.

Glen Urcheen !  
Straight vale of ridge serene,  
No man than Naisi brighter  
In the light air of Urcheen.

Glen Itty !  
There my first house, my pity !  
Lovely woods, at morn, unrolled.  
The Sun's Fold <sup>1</sup> was Glen Itty.

Glen Da Roe !  
Love to all who thither go,  
Cuckoos call from bending bough  
O'er the brow of Glen Da Roe.

Dear is Draigan o'er the strand,  
Dear its waters on pure sand ;  
I would ne'er from Alba rove  
Came I not thence with my Love.

<sup>1</sup> This is a literal translation of the poetic Irish words, "buaile gréine" ; as the herdsman inclosed his herd in a fold, so the sun inclosed his rays in Glen Itty. "Buaile," anglicized "Boolie," came to mean the mountain places to which (as still in Norway and Switzerland) cattle were driven in summer for pasture. Glen Itty was the sun's "boolie."

THE CLOUD OVER EMAIN <sup>1</sup>

Foreboding treachery, Deirdré sought to dissuade the Sons of Usnach from accepting King Concobar's invitation, in vain. As they drew near his court at Emain, she sang her last lay of warning :

“Lo, Naisi, the cloud on high  
Which I see in yonder sky :  
I see, o'er Emain's tower,  
A crimson Blood-cloud lower.

“Chilled with sudden fear am I,  
Seeing that cloud in the sky ;  
Like gout of gore it showeth—  
The thin cloud dreadful groweth.

“I would give you counsel here,  
Sons of Usnach, fair and dear :  
Wend not Emain-ward this night  
Under omen of affright.

“To Dundelgan <sup>2</sup> be our way,  
With Cuchulainn let us stay ;  
Then, upon the morrow, forth  
Hie with him unto the north.”

<sup>1</sup> In his song beginning “Avenging and bright,” Moore refers to this omen in the line, “By the red cloud that hung over Conor's dark dwelling.”

<sup>2</sup> Now Dundalk.

Naisi, in a wrath, replied  
 To fair Deirdré, prophet-eyed :  
 "Fear frights not us, unshaken,  
 Thy course shall not be taken."

"Seldom was it known of old,  
 Royal sons of Rury bold,  
 That discord did us sever—  
 I and thou, Naisi—never !

"When Manannan gave the draught,  
 We and true Cuchulainn quafft,  
 Thou hadst not, for might of men,  
 Been against me, Naisi, then.

"That day we fled together,  
 O'er Esroe's stormy weather,  
 Thou hadst not, I say again,  
 Been against me, Naisi, then !"

## LAMENT FOR THE SONS OF USNACH

After the death of the Sons of Usnach, King Concobar Mac Nessa sought to win the favour of Deirdré by honours, feasts, and music : she rejected all, remembering their faithful fellowship, and her love. In the Court of Emain she sang the defiant dirge of its betrayed guests.

### DEIRDRE

WAIL the Warriors, and your shame,  
 Killed at Emain, when they came :  
 Nobly came they here at once,  
 Usnach's high heroic sons.

Naisi, gallant, gentle, good,—  
 Mourn with me his murdered blood !  
 Ardan, victor of the boar,—  
 Weep too, Ainli, strong no more !

Sweet to you the mellow mead  
 That Mac Nessa loves to speed ;  
 Ever sweeter seems the fare  
 I with Usnach's Sons used share.

When that Naisi urged the chase  
 Through the wood and wilderness,  
 All was more than honey sweet,  
 When they fetched the forest meat.

Ye think the wailing mellow  
 Of pipe and trumpet yellow ;  
 I have heard,—tell Concobar !  
 Music more melodious far.

Sweet to Concobar, the King,  
 When the pipes and trumpets sing ;  
 Sweeter song made me rejoice—  
 Usnach's Sons' delightful voice !

Naisi—strong sound of ocean !  
 Sweet list'ning to its motion !  
 Great as Ardan's call to roam,  
 Ainli's cheer was, hying home.

Naisi's grave is made this night,—  
Sorrow comes of it and blight !—  
He filled foemen, ring on ring,  
With red waves of slaughtering.

Lovely was their childhood's flow'r,  
Mighty grew their manhood's pow'r :  
Sorrow comes of it and scathe—  
Usnach's Sons are done to death.

Dear their converse bright !  
Dear their strong young lofty might !  
When they came from Erinn's war  
Dear their welcome forms afar.

Dear their blue eyes, woman-loved,  
Praise went round them when they roved ;  
When they came from forest chase  
'Twas delight their track to trace.

I sleep no more ;  
Once of yore my cheek was red ;  
Me strains of welcome cheer not,  
Now I hear not Naisi's tread.

I sleep never,  
Sorrows sever now for naught :  
What to me feast or playing,  
Whose mind straying, all distraught.



Not for me be banquet spread,  
Nor mead red, nor welcoming ;  
Soft nor sweet, nor song nor sport,  
Palace proud, nor court of King.

### III.—THE FIONN PERIOD

#### DAWN OF SUMMER <sup>1</sup>

##### FIRST LAY OF FIONN MAC CUMAL

SOFT Summer's first day !  
How radiant the sky !  
Merles lilt their full lay,—  
Would Laiga were nigh !  
Clear call the cuckoos,  
Glad welcomes still greet  
Sweet Summer's bright hues !  
By branchy wood's brim  
Swift steeds seek the stream,  
Its gleam swallows skim ;  
Floweth fine heather's hair,  
Bloweth frail bog-down fair,  
Flee-eth frown of evil sign,  
Planets beam bright benign,  
Soft sigh the sleepy seas,  
Flowers flourish o'er the leas.

<sup>1</sup> The original, with translation by Dr. O'Donovan, appeared in "The Boyish Exploits of Find Mac Cumall," published in the "Proceedings of the Ossianic Society," Vol. IV. Find = Finn and Fionn.

WINTER'S APPROACH<sup>1</sup>

FIONN MAC CUMAL

LIST my lay : oxen roar,  
 Winter chides, Summer's o'er,  
 Sinks the sun, cold winds rise,  
 Moans assail, ocean cries.

Ferns flush red, change hides all,  
 Clanging now, gray geese call,  
 Wild wings cringe, cold with rime,  
 Drear, most drear, ice-frost time.

## A WARRIOR'S DUTIES

FIONN MAC CUMAL<sup>2</sup>

THOU, Mac Lugach, shalt discern  
 What the warrior-order learn :  
 Keep in hall a courteous mood  
 Though in brunt of battle rude.

<sup>1</sup> The original is quoted in tract on the Amra of Columbcille, edited by Professor O'Beirne Crowe, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> "Silva Gadelica." Mac Lugach was Finn's grandson. When born he was laid in Finn's bosom, then Finn laid the babe in his wife's bosom, who nurtured him till his twelfth year had closed, and the age of arms had come. She equipped him, and sent him to Finn, who gave him a very gentle welcome. The lad plighted service and fealty, striking his hand in Finn's. He was with the Fianna for a year, but he was so indolent that but nine of his pupils had been taught to kill deer or boar, and, worse still, he beat his hounds and his

Blame thy spouse not, without thought,  
 Never beat thy hound for naught ;  
 Never strive with senseless loon—  
 Wouldst thou war with a buffoon ?

Gird at none of goodly fame,  
 Share not in the brawler's shame ;  
 Keep apart thy path, again,  
 From or mad or evil men.

Two thirds of thy softness show  
 Women, babes that creep below,  
 Bards that varied verse evoke—  
 Nor be fierce with common folk.

Be not first to seek thy sleep  
 Where awake thy fellows keep ;  
 Rules respect, false friendship shun,  
 Nor revered be ev'ry one.

Speak not thou mere words of might,  
 Say not thou'lt not yield what's right—  
 For a shame is mighty speech  
 When the deed is out of reach.

Never thou thy chief forsake  
 Till red earth thy life shall take ;  
 Nor for gem nor gold reward  
 Fail in warrant to thy ward.

servitors. Then the Fianna, at Ross in Killarney, made their complaint to Finn, and bade him choose between Mac Lugach and them. Finn admonished his grandson in this poem, and by its counsels Mac Lugach guided his life thereafter.

Never to the chieftain's ear  
 Blame his household too severe,  
 It suits no true man's estate  
 Faulting low folk to the great.

Thou'lt bear no glozing story,  
 Not thine the carper's glory,  
 Thine, conduct clear and knightly,  
 Hence men shall serve thee brightly.

Never long the ale horn hold,  
 Never once deride the old ;  
 What is worthy that maintain,  
 Make not of misfortune pain.

Food to foodless ne'er refuse,  
 Nor for friend a niggard choose ;  
 Never on the great intrude,  
 Nor give cause for censure rude.

Guard thy garments, guard thine arms  
 Through the heat of battle harms ;  
 Ne'er to frowning fortune bow,  
 Steadfast, stern, and soft be thou.

## THINGS DELIGHTFUL

### OISIN <sup>1</sup>

SWEET is a voice in the land of gold,  
 Sweet is the calling of wild birds bold,  
 Sweet is the shriek of the heron hoar,  
 Sweet fall of the billows of Bundatore.

<sup>1</sup> The original appeared in the Dean of Lismore's Book

Sweet is the sound of the blowing breeze,  
 Sweet is the blackbird's song in the trees,  
 Lovely the sheen of the shining sun,  
 Sweet is the thrush over Casacon.

Sweet shouts the eagle of Assaroe,  
 Where the gray seas of Mac Morna flow,  
 Sweet calls the cuckoo the valleys o'er,  
 Sweet, through the silence, the corrie's roar.

Fionn, my father, is chieftain old  
 Of seven battalions of Fianna bold ;  
 When he sets free all the deerhounds fleet  
 To rise and to follow with him is sweet.

### THE COLD NIGHT OF INNISFAIL <sup>1</sup>

COLD, cold,  
 Chill, this night, is Lurc's wide wold :  
 Foodless now the gaunt deer goes,  
 High o'er hills the snows are rolled.

<sup>1</sup> Whilst Diarmid and Gráinné were hiding from Finn in the cave of Howth, this lay was composed to induce them to remain there, by their servant. Whilst they were deliberating whether or not to fly from their cave of refuge (which Professor Kuno Meyer thinks to be that on the north side of the Hill of Howth), she went to watch and report. She met Finn ; he professed to admire her, and then she betrayed the lovers. She dipped her cloak in the sea, and, on her return, spread it across the door, chanting this lay of a terrible tempest. But Gráinné touched the cloak with her tongue, found it salt, and discovered the treachery in time. The rime and measure are given. This ancient poem was published in the "Revue Celtique," Vol. XI., by Professor Kuno Meyer, with translation.

Cold to death  
Sweeps the broad'ning tempest's breath ;  
Round the fords the whirlpools roar,  
Rills through ridges pour in wrath.

Each loch now a sea doth make,  
And a great lake is each pond ;  
No steed wins the ford of Röss,  
No foot dares to cross beyond.

Fishes Innisfail must flee,  
Since there's neither sea nor strand ;  
Bells are dumb, no herons call  
Land is none in all the Land.

In their Cuan cove no hound  
Yet has found repose or rest ;  
Nor may wren of Leiter Lone  
Shelter in its own round nest.<sup>1</sup>

On the small bird-comrades beat  
Icy darts and sleety winds ;  
Not one nook in Cuan's grove,  
As 'twould love, the blackbird finds.

Cheerful is our cauldron here,  
Cold and drear is Leiter Lone ;  
Staff in hand, what toil to go,  
Climbing snow where tempests moan.

Even the ancient eagle chief  
Shakes in grief 'neath Rigi's<sup>2</sup> peak ;

<sup>1</sup> The wren builds the warmest nest.

<sup>2</sup> Glen Rigi is the Vale of Newry.



Pierced with pain, the bitter breeze  
Soon may freeze with ice her beak.

From soft down for snows to part,  
Hearken heart!—'twere madly bold;  
Ice-heaps cumber every ford,  
Hence each word I cry is cold.

## THE FAIR FORT OF CRÉDE

CAEL, SON OF CRIMTANN

PLEASANT is her fortress fair,  
Men and maids and boys are there,  
Druids and the Sons of Song,  
Cupmen, doormen, skilled and strong.

Men for steed, and men for stall,  
Men to rule the roast in hall;  
Supreme o'er all sits Créde  
Bright, beauteous, gold-haired lady.

Dear to me that pleasant dun,  
With soft down to sit upon;  
Were the will in Créde's breast,  
Happy here would be my quest.

Full fair the porch, where splendid  
Blue wings and yellow blended:  
Round the fountain is a wall  
Of crystal and carmogal.

Bowl of juice of berry glints,  
Whence her eyebrows black she tints ;  
Clear vats of ale are flowing,  
Rich cups and goblets glowing.

Lime-white is her fortress wall,  
Rugs and rushes deck her hall,  
Silks are seen and mantles blue,  
Gold and horns of glossy hue.

Her bow'r by lakelet beameth,  
There gold with silver gleameth,  
Wings, brown and crimson, cover  
Blent bright, its roof all over.

Pillars twain of green stand there,  
By the portal, passing fair ;  
Spoil of silver, famed of yore,  
Forms the beam above the door.

On thy left is Crédé's chair,  
Ever fairer and more fair ;  
By dainty bed 'tis shining,  
Alpine gold round it twining.

O'er this chair. like a bower,  
Crédé's couch seems to tower ;  
Orient-built by Tuil's device  
With pure gold and gems of price.

Yet a bed beams on thy right  
Built of gold and silver white ;  
From rods of light bronze, looping,  
Fall fox-glove curtains drooping.

In that home, the household bright  
 Seem all destined to delight ;  
 Never mantle dim or bare  
 'Neath the clusters of their hair.

Wounded men sink to slumbers,  
 Whilst blood their bodies cumber,  
 When they hear birds of Faery  
 Sing o'er her bower airy.

If she grant me grace at all—  
 She, for whom the cuckoos call,<sup>1</sup>  
 Then I, for thanks, will give her  
 More lays to live for ever.

### THE DIRGE OF CAEL<sup>2</sup>

BY CRÉDÉ, HIS SPOUSE ·

MOANS the bay—  
 Billows gray round Ventry roar,  
 Drowned is Cael Mac Crimtann brave,  
 'Tis for him sob wave and shore.

Heron hoar  
 'Mid the moor of Dromatren,  
 Found the fox her young attack,  
 Bleeding, drove him back again.

<sup>1</sup> This is a subtle compliment. The cuckoos call for the approach of summer, hence Crédé's presence is like the coming of young summer.

<sup>2</sup> The rimes and metre of the original are given. For its curious history, see Appendix.

Sore the sigh  
Sobs the stag from Drumlis nigh ;  
Dead the hind of high Drumsailin,  
Hence the sad stag's wailing cry.

Wild the wail  
From the thrush of Drumkeen's dale ;  
Not less sad the blackbird's song,  
Mourning long in Letir's vale.

Woe is me !  
Dead my Cael is fair and free :  
Oft my arms would ward his sleep,  
Now it is the deep, dark sea.

Woe, the roar  
Rolling round from sea and shore ;  
Since he fought the foreign foe,  
Mine the woe for Cael no more.

Sad the sound,  
From the beach and billows round ;  
I have seen my time this day :  
Change in form and face is found.

Ever raining  
Fall the plaining waves above ;  
I have hope of joy no more,  
Since 'tis o'er our bond of love.

Dead, the swan  
Mourns his mate on waters wan,

Great the grief that makes me know  
Share of woe with dying swan.

Drowned was Cael Mac Crimtann brave,  
Now I've nought of life my own :  
Heroes fell below his glaive,  
His high shield has ceased to moan.

### WHERE IS THE SWEETEST MUSIC ?<sup>1</sup>

NOBLE news of Song and Valour  
Bear I Balor's fort within,  
Little heed I who may hearken,  
If my song be heard of Finn !

Men were gay in golden Allin<sup>2</sup>  
Hill and hall in, far and wide ;  
Feast was spread and music flowing  
And we saw our Finn preside.

Ossian staunch, and Diarmid stately  
Sate by Luay, greatly strong,  
And their friends, at feast and foray :  
Ancient Conan, Oscar young.

“Speak, ye champion chiefs, rejoicing,”  
Rang the voice of Finn around,  
“Tell me each, in answer meetest,  
Where is sweetest music found ?”

<sup>1</sup> Dean of Lismore's Book.

<sup>2</sup> The Fortress of Finn, Commander of the Fianna.

“There’s one music fit for faming :  
 Give me gaming,” Conan cried,—  
 Strong his hand for crash of combat.  
 But his head was sense denied.

“Song of Swords for war, unsheathing,”—  
 With quick breathing came the word,  
 “Throng of blows when falling fleetest,”—  
 Seemed the sweetest Oscar heard.

“There is music more endearing,”  
 Dark-eyed Diarmid did declare ;  
 “Naught comes nigh the voice’s cadence—  
 When the maiden’s soft and fair.”

“Sweeter song at dawning dewy—”  
 Said Mac Luay, sharp of spear,  
 “When the bounding dogs are crying,  
 And we race the flying deer.”

“This is Song, and this is Music”—  
 Spoke our lofty Leader old,  
 “Blowing breeze ’mid moving banners  
 And an Army ’neath their gold.”

“Then I fear no bardic passion,  
 Ossian !” said our Captain strong,  
 “With my faithful Fianna round me—  
 These to me are Harp and Song !”

IV.—OSSIANIC : AGE OF  
LAMENTATIONS

AFTER THE FIANNA<sup>1</sup>

OISIN

LONG, this night, the clouds delay,  
And long to me was yesternight,  
Long was the dreary day, this day,  
Long, yesterday, the light.

Each day that comes to me is long—  
Not thus our wont to be of old,  
With never music, harp nor song,  
Nor clang of battles bold.

No wooing soft, nor feats of might,  
Nor cheer of chase, nor ancient lore,  
Nor banquet gay, nor gallant fight—  
All things beloved of yore.

No marching now with martial fire—  
Alas, the tears that make me blind—

<sup>1</sup> Dean of Lismore's Book.



Far other was my heart's desire  
A-hunting stag and hind.

Long this night the clouds delay—  
No striving now as champions strove,  
No run of hounds with mellow bay,  
Nor leap in lakes we love.

No hero now where heroes hurled—  
Long this night the clouds delay—  
No man like me in all the world,  
Alone with grief, and gray.

Long this night the clouds delay—  
I raise their grave-carn, stone on stone,  
For Fionn and Fianna passed away—  
I, Ossian, left alone.

### THE BLACKBIRD OF DARICARN <sup>1</sup>

SWEET thy song, in Dari grove,  
No sweeter song from east to west,  
No music like thy voice of love—  
And thou beneath thy nest !

A strain the softest ever heard,  
No more shall come its like to men.  
O Patrick ! list the wondrous bird—  
Thou'lt chant thy hymn again.

<sup>1</sup> "Transactions of Gaelic Society."

If thou, as I, but knew the tale  
 It sings to all the ancient isle,  
 Thy tears would rise, and thou wouldst fail  
 To mind thy God awhile.

In Norrøway beyond the wave,  
 Its forest glades and streams among  
 That bird was found by Fionn the brave,  
 And still we hear its song.

'Tis Daricarn yon western wood—  
 The Fianna huntsmen loved it best,  
 And there, on stately oak and good,  
 Lost Fionn placed its nest.

The tuneful tumult of that bird,  
 The belling deer on ferny steep—  
 This welcome in the dawn he heard,  
 These soothed at eve his sleep.

Dear to him the wind-loved heath,  
 The whirr of wings, the rustling brake,  
 Dear the murmuring glens beneath,  
 And sob of Droma's lake.

The cry of hounds at early morn,  
 The pattering o'er the pebbly creek,  
 The cuckoo's call, the sounding horn,  
 The swooping eagle's shriek.

The mountain, not the cell, they sought,  
 Great Fionn and the Fianna fleet ;  
 Than tinkle of the bells, they thought  
 The blackbird's song more sweet !

## THE HOUSEHOLD OF FINN

OISIN <sup>1</sup>

I'VE seen the House of Finn,  
 No housefolk they of humble fame,  
 Last night—a Vision thin—  
 The Hero's household came.

I've seen the House of Art  
 Where towered apart his brown, bright son,  
 Not one like worth could win—  
 I've seen the House of Finn.

None sees what I have seen,  
 Finn wield the wondrous sword of Luin,  
 What woe, that sight—unseen !  
 I've seen the House of Finn.

The tale could never cease  
 Of woes that rend my heart within,  
 Then let me Thou have peace—  
 I've seen the House of Finn !

<sup>1</sup> Dean of Lismore's Book.

PLEASANT ARANN <sup>1</sup>

ARANN !—in deer delighting !  
 Ocean smiles o'er her shoulders ;  
 Men have feasts there, and fighting,  
 Blue darts redden 'mid boulders.

Hinds make merry her mountains,  
 O'er moss-berries they've morriced ;  
 Rills flow cool from her fountains,  
 Nuts fill her brown oak forest.

Hounds are there of high powers,  
 Fruits are bending the bramble ;  
 Homes are bough-woven bowers,  
 Deer in the deep wood ramble.

Red her rock-crop for reaping,  
 Faultless grass grow her valleys ;  
 Over smooth wood-lawns leaping,  
 Fawns dance, dappled, in alleys.

Sleek her swine in the musters,  
 Truly nothing comes nigh her ;  
 Fair, through the hazel clusters,  
 Sailing of long ships by her.

Pleasant, when winter's dying—  
 With trout 'neath banks not barren,  
 Fleet gulls, answering, flying—  
 Pleasant all times is Arann !

<sup>1</sup> By Caillé. From "Silva Gadelica," edited with translations by Standish Hayes O'Grady. London : Williams and Norgate.

SOLACE IN WINTER :<sup>1</sup>

CAILTÉ

CHILL the winter, cold the wind,  
 Up the stag springs, stark of mind :  
 Fierce and bare the mountain fells—  
 But the brave stag boldly bells.

He will not set side to rest  
 On Sliav Carna's snowy breast ;  
 Eghta's stag, also rousing,  
 Hears wail of wolves carousing.

Cailté I, and Diarmid Donn,  
 Oft, with Oscar apt to run,  
 When piercing night was paling,  
 Heard rousing wolves a-wailing.

Sound may sleep the russet stag,  
 With his hide hid in the crag ;  
 Him, hidden, nothing aileth  
 When piercing night prevaileth.

I am aged now and gray,  
 Few of men I meet this day ;  
 But I hurled the javelin bold  
 Of a morning, icy cold.

Thanks unto the King of Heaven,  
 And the Virgin's son be given :  
 Many men have I made still,  
 Who this night are very chill.

<sup>1</sup> "Silva Gadelica." Colloquy with the Ancients.

LAMENT FOR THE TWO KINGS

TORNA<sup>1</sup> A.D. 423

FAR from me my wards ne'er were,  
 Tara's, Caisiol's<sup>2</sup> kingly pair :  
 Eoghan's offspring, great of might,  
 Conn's, like Conn the famed in fight.

Erinn was their equal dower,  
 Like in prowess, like in power ;  
 Strong was Niall, valour's shield,  
 Never Corc a yard would yield.

Had not he to Alba gone  
 Niall Mac Ochai Mumadon,  
 Corc had held the victor's place  
 Were not Niall face to face.

Ne'er was seen like Niall a man  
 In his far-fought battle van :  
 Ne'er was seen a man, like Corc  
 Stript, his swift thin sword at work.

<sup>1</sup> Torna is regarded as one of the last of the pagan bards. Arch-Druid, he was preceptor to the two Kings, Corc, King of Caisiol (in the southern half of Ireland), and his greater contemporary, who ruled the northern half from Tara, Niall of the Nine Hostages, who had brought St. Patrick a captive into the country. There is no trace of Christian influence in the poem. The characters of the kings and the bard's distinctive devotion are subtly shown. The original deserves to stand as a pagan classic.

<sup>2</sup> Caisiol, pr. Cashel, capital of the southern half of Ireland.

Never nobler twain did stand  
 On the lands of Erinn's land :  
 Two champion Chiefs of Story  
 Both great with wisdom's glory.

I am Torna, I who sing  
 Each, my loved lost fosterling ;  
 Would they came each day, as once,  
 My two foster-sons,—my sons !

Sweet, it was to be, of old,  
 'Tween Tara's and Caisioll's hold :  
 From Tara to Caisioll roam,  
 From Caisioll to Tara home.

While as one with Niall, I gaze  
 At binding of his Hostages,  
 While as one with Corc, I share  
 Equal in his counsel's care.

At my right, I Niall place  
 For his intellect and grace,  
 High in honour as became  
 One of Erinn's Kings of fame.

Corc upon my left I seat,  
 To have close a comrade sweet :  
 There, in nearness to my heart,  
 Where Corc ever dwells apart.



Woe for Corc, great Eoghan's son,  
 Woe for Niall, heir of Conn,  
 Woe for Tara, Niall's doom ;  
 Woe for Caisioll, Corc's chill tomb.

It broke my mind and my head,—  
 The King who was Niall is dead ;  
 It broke my heart and my work—  
 There lives not the King was Corc.

Tara now there's tribute on  
 Since Mac Ochai Mumadon ;  
 Since Mac Luay, as a blight  
 Over Caisioll cometh Night.



## V.—THE CHRISTIAN DAWN

### THE GUARDSMAN'S CRY<sup>1</sup>

BY ST. PATRICK

I BIND me to-day on the Triune a call  
With faith on the Trinity—Unity—God over all.  
I bind me the might of Christ's birth and baptizing,  
His death on the Cross, His grave, His uprising,  
His homeward ascent, the power supernal  
Of His coming for judgment eternal.  
I bind me the might of the Seraphim's love,  
The angels' obedience, the hope of arising  
    To guerdon above :  
The prayers of the Fathers, prophetic teachings,  
The virtue of virgins, apostolical preachings  
    The acts of the True ;  
I bind to me, too,  
    Heaven's dower, sun's brightness,  
    Fire's power, snow's whiteness,

<sup>1</sup> This is an ancient Irish name given to St. Patrick's hymn, which is also called "The Deer's Cry." The original is a "Rosg," a poem of short sentences with irregular rhythm and rime, imitated in the translation. It is, I think, the original of the irregular ode.

Winds rushing, lightning's motion,  
 Earth's stability, rock's solidity,  
 Depths of Ocean.

I bind me to-day

God's might to direct me,  
 God's power to protect me,  
 God's wisdom for learning,  
 God's eye for discerning,  
 God's ear for my hearing,  
 God's word for my clearing,  
 God's hand for my cover,  
 God's path to pass over,  
 God's buckler to guard me,  
 God's army to ward me  
 Against snares of the devils,  
 Against vice's temptations,  
 Against wrong inclinations,  
 Against men who plot evils  
 To hurt me anew,  
 Anear or afar, with many or few.

I have set all these powers around me,  
 Against danger and dole  
 Of all the foe-powers that would wound me  
 In body and soul ;  
 Against each incantation  
 By false prophets breathen,  
 Against black legislation—  
 The laws of the heathen,

Against idolatry's wares, and heretical snares,  
 Against spells of the women, smiths, druids, the whole  
 Of that knowledge which blindeth the soul.

Christ keep me to-day  
 Against poison and burn,  
 Against drowning and wounding,  
 Until I may earn  
 The guerdon abounding.

Christ near,  
 Christ here,  
 Christ be with me  
 Christ beneath me,  
 Christ within me,  
 Christ behind me,  
 Christ be o'er me,  
 Christ before me,  
 Christ on the left and the right,  
 Christ hither and thither,  
 Christ in the sight

Of each eye that shall seek me,  
 Christ in each ear that shall hear,  
 Christ in each mouth that shall speak me,  
 Christ not the less,  
 In each heart I address.

I bind me to-day on the Triune the call  
 With faith, on the Trinity—Unity—God over all.

Christi est salus  
 Christi est salus  
 Salus tua, Domine, sit semper nobiscum !

THE CHILDREN OF LIR<sup>1</sup>

King Lir's wife, Queen Aifa, becoming jealous of her step-children, bade them bathe in Loch Derryvara ; then, striking them with a Druid wand, they were changed into four beautiful pure white swans. She doomed them to pass a term of many years on the lake, another term on the current of Cantire, and a third term on the Sea of Erris.

## AIFA

“ HENCE, king's offspring, and away,  
 Doomed for aye, a blighted race :  
 Friends your woeful tale shall weep,  
 You shall keep with birds your place.”

## FIONNUALA

“ Witch ! thy true name now we know,  
 Foul the blow, no boat is nigh ;  
 Doomed to swim from wave to wave,  
 Oft from cape to cape we'll fly.

“ We shall yet see, manifest,  
 Grace and rest of joyous worth :  
 Though our bound's the gray lake marge,  
 Our minds shall, at large, go forth.”

<sup>1</sup> This is the name of the second of the “ Three Sorrows of Story,” O'Curry, “ Atlantis,” Vol. IV., 1863, text and translation. The original metres are reproduced.

## ON THE WATERS OF MOYLE

Time passed pleasantly with the Swan-Children, on the lake: in the day they conversed with their kindred and friends who had encamped around; at night they sang "slow, sweet, fairy music," that made sorrow sleep. This term closed: they bade farewell to all, and went forth to the Waters of Moyle, where they suffered from icy storms. Fionnuala, covering her young brothers with her wings, sang:

"LIFE is weary here,  
Great the snowing here,  
Night is dreary here,  
Bleak the blowing here."

On a day, they saw a Fairy Cavalcade at the river Banna, and were told that Lir and their friends were celebrating the Feast of Age, happy but for their absence. Fionnuala made this lay:<sup>1</sup>

Gay this night Lir's royal house,  
Chiefs carouse, mead flows amain:  
Cold this night his children roam,  
Their chill home the icy main.

For our mantles fair are found  
Feathers curving round our breasts:  
Often silken robes we had,  
Purple-clad, we sat at feasts.

<sup>1</sup> This theme suggested Moore's "Silent, O Moyle," and the "Song of Fionnuala" of Katherine Tynan (now Mrs. Tynan-Hinkson).



For our viands here and wine—  
 Bitter brine and pallid sands :  
 Of the hazel mead they served  
 In carved vessels to our hands.

Now our beds are the bare rock  
 Smit with shock of heavy seas :  
 Often soft breast-down was spread  
 For the bed of grateful ease.

Though 'tis now, in frost, our toil,  
 To swim Moyle, with drooping wings :  
 Oft we rode as Royal Wards  
 And our guards were sons of Kings.

### THE RETURN OF THE CHILDREN OF LIR

In the extremity of their suffering, frozen in Erris sea, the brothers were inconsolable. Fionnuala asked them to believe in the true God, and they were relieved, and suffered no more. At the end of their final term, they arose and went very lightly and airily towards the city of their father. "And thus they found the place : void, desolate, with naught but the bare green paths and forests of nettles, without house, without fire, without tribes. Then the Four drew close together, and thrice they raised on high the cry of wailing, then Fionnuala spoke this lay" :

STRANGE is all this place to me,  
 No house, no home, no gladness ;  
 As 'tis thus, this place to see—  
 Alas, my heart, what sadness !

No hound, no sound, no ember,  
No group where princes gather ;  
Not thus do we remember  
Its old days with our father.

No horn, no goblet glancing,  
No halls of light, each morrow :  
No youth, no proud steed prancing—  
All signs portend us sorrow.

All the void that here I see—  
Alas, my pain grows stronger !  
Makes it, this night, clear to me  
Its loved lord lives no longer.

City, where of old we knew  
All arts of joy exerted,  
What a fate of woe and rue—  
Thou art, this night, deserted !

Dark our doom and tragical—  
Condemned the waves to wander,  
Ne'er such ill fate magical  
Did mortal yet fall under.

Now, the City populous  
Gives weeds and woods its favour :  
No man lives who'd welcome us  
To this, our homestead, ever.

THE ISLE OF DELIGHT <sup>1</sup>

## SIXTH CENTURY

THERE's an island far away,  
 Round it swift sea-horses play ;  
 Four pillars bear it gracious,  
 O'er surge of ocean spacious.

Joy of eyes, that plain where are  
 Hosts at gay games near and far ;  
 Barks there with chariots vying  
 Race oft, for triumph trying.

Whitest bronze, the pillars fair  
 Gleam through happy ages there,  
 Lovely land o'er whose bosom  
 Soft falls the sweetest blossom.

Tall stands the Tree of Flowers  
 Where birds call in its bowers,  
 Call to Hours the leaves among  
 At due times, with choral song.

O'er the plains, sweet-voiced, tender,  
 Beam many hues in splendour,  
 Joys, with music, gently crowd  
 The south plain of Silver Cloud.

<sup>1</sup> "Voyage of Bran" (Nutt). On a day, Bran heard entrancing music ; when he awoke, he saw a woman with a flowering apple-branch of silver and crystal, who sang this lay. It gives a picture of the Ancient Paradise of the Gael—their "limbus patrum." The bard endeavours to harmonise it with the new doctrine of Christianity.

There deceit nor wailing is  
 In that fruitful land of bliss,  
 Naught rude or rugged showeth  
 But soft, sweet music floweth.

Grief or darkness none, nor death,  
 Ill, nor any harm it hath.<sup>1</sup>  
 This tells of Emain's<sup>2</sup> glory ;  
 Where else such wondrous story ?

'Tis the beauty of things bright,  
 Loveliness is in its sight,  
 Cheer it gives hearts all cheerless,  
 Its halo-haze is peerless.

In the Valley Bountiful  
 Rubies show'r, and gems we cull ;  
 Billows beat the shore, and rain  
 Crystal hairs from ocean's mane.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These and other verses are evidently the originals of passages in "The Pricke of Conscience" and in the "Land of Cokaigne," *e.g.* :

"Under heaven n'is land I wiss  
 Of so mochil joy and bliss.  
 There is many swete sight :  
 All is day, n'is there no night ;  
 There is baret, nother strife,  
 N'is there no death, ac ever life.  
 There n'is lack of meat, no cloth,  
 There n'is man no woman wroth.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Ok all is game, joy, and glee,  
 Well is him that there may be."

<sup>2</sup> Emain is here the name of the Irish (pagan) paradise.

<sup>3</sup> From such metaphors often enigmatical, the Norse Skalds got models for the synonyms so common in their Court verses.

Wealth, health, and varied treasures  
 Dower this mild Land of Pleasures,  
 Mellow tunes ever flowing,  
 Lucent wines always glowing.

In Moy Réin, gold chariots ride,  
 Rising sunward with the tide ;  
 Moy Mon's cars are silver white,  
 And bronze chariots beaming bright.

Gold-hued steeds fly o'er the strand,  
 Crimson steeds along the land ;  
 Fleecy steeds are bounding too,  
 Azure as the heavens blue.

There shall come, with dawn's whiteness,  
 One fair man, shedding brightness ;  
 He will ride the wave-beat flood,  
 Stirring ocean till 'tis blood.

There shall come a host with oars,  
 Rowing to these happy shores,  
 To the Splendid Rock <sup>1</sup> they'll row  
 Whence a hundred sweet strains flow.

To the hosts 'twill ever sing,  
 Making all the ages ring :  
 Rising with a myriad choirs,—  
 Death shall never dim their fires !

Happiness shall hereafter  
 Hither come, girt with laughter,

<sup>1</sup> Possibly the Church is thus symbolized.

Health will come, ne'er to sever,  
 Joy comes that lasts for ever.

What a day of sunlit hours,  
 Silver o'er the land it showers !  
 That Rock stands the shore upon,  
 Taking radiance from the Sun.<sup>1</sup>

In Moy Mon, the hosts that came  
 Urge the great and noble game ;  
 O'er its varied beauty they  
 Meet nor death nor slow decay.

They hear music in the night,  
 Through this Isle of all Delight—  
 Flash of beauty's diadem—  
 With the white cloud over them.

\* \* \* \*

There shall be a wondrous birth  
 In no lofty place of earth,  
 Hence a Virgin's Son shall take  
 Rule o'er myriads for their sake.

Rule that ends not, nor began ;  
 He has made the world and man,  
 His the earth and the great sea ;  
 Woe, who His unfriend shall be.

He made heaven high and bright,  
 (Happy he whose heart is white !)  
 He will cleanse with waters clean,  
 And make whole who sick hath been.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* God, the Sun of Heaven.

BRAN'S VOYAGE TO THE ISLE OF  
DELIGHT <sup>1</sup>

SIXTH CENTURY

“BRAN beholds a shining sea,  
From his curach, fair and free,—  
I, in chariot driving there  
See a flow'ring meadow fair.

“The sea is clear,  
So thinks Bran when sailing here,—  
I, in car, with purer pow'rs  
Know the happy Plain of Flow'rs.

“Bran beholds  
Flowing billows, fold on folds,—  
O'er the plain I have in sight  
Waving blossoms red and bright.

“Summer sea-steeds <sup>2</sup> leapt and ran  
Far as reach the eyes of Bran,—  
Rivers, run with honey clear  
In the fair land of Mac Lir.

<sup>1</sup> Bran sailed forth to seek the Island of Delight—the very Gentle Land. When he had been at sea two days, he saw one in a chariot driving over the waters who was Manannan the son of Lir, the Ocean-god, who sang this lay.

“Voyage of Bran, son of Febal, to the Land of the Living,” by Kuno Meyer, and Alfred Nutt (London : Nutt, 1895).

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, MacLir = waves.



“ He, the ocean’s gleaming glint  
Sees, and billows’ pallid tint—  
I, the bounteous land behold  
Decked with azure and with gold,

“ Speckled salmon leap for him  
From the water’s bitter brim,—  
I can see, o’er lovely lawns,  
Lambkins play and frolic fawns,

“ Thine eyes mark one charioteer  
O’er Moy Mell in light appear—  
Many chariots race, I ween,  
O’er the plain, by thee, unseen.

“ Wide the plain, the hosts are great,  
Bright their colours, high their state,  
Streams of silver, gleams of gold  
Welcome and abundance hold.

“ Beauteous their delightful game,  
Flows the wine like ruddy flame,  
Noble men and gentle maids  
Stainless in the sinless shades.

“ O’er the finest forest trees  
Swam thy curach, cleaving seas,  
Bright fruit on boughs are glancing  
Now, ’neath thy prow advancing.

“ Branches rich with fruit and bloom  
Breathing forth the vine’s perfume ;  
Woods moulder not, tho’ olden,  
Faultless, with foliage golden.

“ We are here since Time had birth,  
Aging not, nor called to earth ;  
Nor fear we aught should wither  
Since the Sin came not hither.

“ For the snake went, ill the hour !  
To the Father’s <sup>1</sup> fortress bow’r ;—  
An ill change on earth was wrought,  
Gray decay, unknown, it brought.

“ He has slain us, in disgrace,  
Greed has wrecked his noble race,  
Thence, with’ring Body wasteth,  
Hence oft to torment hasteth.

“ Law of worldlings is Pride’s nod,  
Minding creatures and not God :  
Hence decay, disease, defeat,  
Age, and soul-death through deceit.

“ Yet, our Maker-king shall send  
Great deliverance ere the end,  
There shall come White Law <sup>2</sup> o’er sea,  
And He God and Man shall be.”

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Adam’s.

<sup>2</sup> The Norse apparently got the term White Christ from the Irish.

## VI.—VII.—EARLY CHRISTIAN

### JESUKIN <sup>1</sup>

ST. ITA (B. 480—D. 570)

JESUKIN  
Lives my little cell within ;  
What were wealth of cleric high—  
All is lie but Jesukin.

Nursling nurtured, as 'tis right—  
Harbours here no servile sprite—  
Jesu of the skies, who art  
Next my heart thro' every night !

Jesukin, my good for aye,  
Calling and will not have nay,  
King of all things, ever true,  
He shall rue who will away.

Jesu, more than angels aid,  
Fosterling nor formed to fade,  
Nursed by me in desert wild,  
Jesu, child of Judah's Maid.

<sup>1</sup> Whitley Stokes, LL.D. "On the Calendar of  $\mathfrak{C}$ Engus,"  
"Royal Irish Academy's Transactions," 1880. Note, p. xxxv.

Isucan : loving diminutive of Isa—in modern Irish, Iosa—  
applied to the Child Jesus.

Sons of Kings and kingly kin,  
 To my land may enter in ;  
 Guest of none I hope to be,  
 Save of Thee, my Jesukin !

Unto heaven's High King confest  
 Sing a chorus, maidens blest !  
 He is o'er us, though within  
 Jesukin is on my breast !

### KING CELLACH REGRETS HIS STUDENT LIFE †

CIRCA 540

Woe to him who leaveth lore  
 For the red World's art or ore ;  
 Who the True God's love would leave  
 With the false World's king to cleave.

Woe, who taketh arms in life  
 And repenteth not of strife,  
 Better far books of whiteness  
 Where psalms are seen in brightness.

† "Silva Gadelica.—A Collection of Irish Tales." Edited and translated by Standish Hayes O'Grady. London: Williams and Norgate. King Eogan of Connaght, being wounded to death, advised that his chieftains should beseech his elder son Cellach to leave his Student-life at Clonmicnóis, and assume arms and kingship, for the safety of the State. Reluctantly he consented. Then arose a rival (Guairé) who, at a tryst, treacherously fell upon Cellach's company. Cellach (pronounced Kellach) and a small band escaped to the woods as outlaws: there he composed this poem.

Though great the war-man's glory  
 Much the toil and short his story :  
 Swift and sharp his life hath past  
 In exchange for hell at last.

Still stealth of trades is meanest,  
 Murky, lorn, lankest, leanest ;  
 Whosoe'er hath good at first  
 Soon he seemeth wicked-worst.

Such the stains that fell upon  
 Hapless Cellach, Eogan's son :  
 Roaming now from place to place  
 With a band of outlaws base.

Woe, who leave high heav'n of saints  
 For dark hell and horrid plaints.  
 Christ, our Light o'er combats dim,  
 Who forsakes Thee, woe to him.

## ST. CELLACH'S DEATH SONG <sup>1</sup>

A.D. 540

'Tis my Love, the Morning fair,  
 Floating, flame-like, through the air :  
 'Tis my Love who sends her, too,  
 Victor Morning, ever new !

<sup>1</sup> *Silva Gadelica.*" Cellach, persecuted by King Guaire, fled; the king bribed the Saint's pupils to betray him. They seized and wounded him, but spared his life for one night in a wood. On opening his prison door, he saw the fatal dawn, and closed it again; but, through faith and in resignation, he re-opened it, and welcomed the morning in this lay. Here he foretells his fate. The rime, measure, and rapid transitions are reproduced.

O Morning, fair and tender !  
 O Sister of Sun's splendour !  
 Welcome thou, O Morning fair !  
 Beaming on my booklet there.

At ev'ry house-guest glancing—  
 All tribes of earth entrancing—  
 Welcome here, O White-neck rare !  
 Winsome, wondrous, golden-fair !

Soon my small fleckt book shall tell  
 That not well my life went past ;  
 Now Maelcrón, set on murther,  
 Fares to further death at last.

Grim fellow,  
 Gray, grip-beak, gleam-eye yellow,—  
 Thou, Scall-crow ! watchful sitter  
 Tak'st bitter care of Cellach.

O constant-croaking Raven !  
 Is thy hunger-craving fresh ?  
 Rise not from this rath-topt hill,  
 Thou shalt have thy fill of flesh.

The keen Kite of far Cluanó  
 Swiftly for the spoil shall go ;  
 Thence, with strong claws full, will start—  
 Nor from me will meekly part.

Fox in forest, lurking low,  
 He shall hear and hail the blow ;  
 He shall bear my flesh and blood  
 Through the wild, dark, dreary wood.

The red Wolf will leave his lair  
In the rath of Drumicdair,  
And rush here, quick and quiet,  
Chief o'er the robbers' riot.

I saw in sleep a Vision !—  
In a recent night of dread :  
Four wild dogs rent me, racking,  
East and West, through bracken red.

I saw in sleep a Vision !—  
On a mission came four men ;  
Me to one gray glen they bore,  
Nevermore to come again.

I saw in sleep a Vision !—  
In derision I was brought,  
With my Wards to feast, methought,  
Each to each, we quaffed of naught.

Little Wren of feeble flight,  
Sad thy promise sung a-right ;  
Methinks to those would slay me  
Thou'dst betray me in the night.

O Maelcrón !—  
What a deed of ill thou'st done !  
Eogan's son would plot thy fall  
Not for all of wealth unwon.

O Maelcrón !—  
Wealth to own my life thou'dst sell—  
For the world thou hast done well,  
Thou hast bargained high for Hell.

I'd give of gold a river,  
 Sleek steeds and jewels greater,  
 Thee, Maelcrón, to deliver  
 That *thou* shouldst be no traitor.

Lo, Mary's Son of glory  
 Hath said me this sooth story :  
 "Thou'lt have earth,—thou shalt have heav'n,  
 I to thee have welcome giv'n !"

## REMEMBER ERINN

ST. COLUMBA <sup>1</sup> (A.D. 563)

'TWERE delightful, O Son of God,  
                     Forward faring,  
 Sail to hoist o'er swelling surges,  
                     Home to Erinn !  
 O'er Moyn-Olarg, past Benevna.  
                     Foyle-ward winging,  
 Where we'd hear the pleasant music  
                     Swans are singing.  
 Hosts of sea-gulls would give welcome,  
                     With white pinions,

<sup>1</sup> St. Columba was born in the year 521. He went into exile to Iona in 563. Having submitted the question of his responsibility for the battle of Cuil-dreimne to St. Molaisi, he was ordered to leave Erinn, and to see it no more. He returned once, it is said, blindfolded, to save the bards from expulsion. He died in 597.



Did "Red Dewy"<sup>1</sup> reach, rejoiceful,  
     Their dominions.  
 Much I have here—but not Erinn—  
     Were that gladness !  
 On this unsung shore of exile,—  
     Shrouded sadness !  
 Woeful was mine ordered voyage,  
     King of Heaven !  
 Cuil's red combat leaves me lonely  
     Here, bereaven.  
 Dima's son is happy yonder,  
     Down in Durrow ;  
 All his mind desires he heareth,  
     Night and morrow :  
 'Mid the elms the swooning breezes  
     Ever playing,  
 Joyous note of blackbird's voice, its  
     Wings displaying,  
 Lowing of Ros-grena's kine, at  
     Dewy dawning,  
 Cuckoo's call at Summer's brink, from  
     Forest awning.  
 Of this peopled world I've left three  
     Dear things only :  
 Durrow, Derry's grove of Angels,  
     Lewy, lonely ;  
 I've loved Erinn's cascade-land, not  
     Rule unrightful,—  
 Days with Congall, feast with Caindech  
     Were delightful.

<sup>1</sup> "Derg Dructach"—"Red Dewy"—St. Columba's sea-ship.

## THE FALL OF THE BOOK-SATCHELS

## ST. COLUMBA

“Now when Longarad was dead, men of lore say this, that the book-satchels of Erinn fell down on that night. Or is it the satchels wherein were books of every science in the cell where Columbcille was that fell then, and every one in that house marvelled at the noisy shaking of the books. So then said Columbcille, ‘Longarad in Ossory,’ quoth he, ‘a sage of every science has now died’ . . . . *et dixit.*”<sup>1</sup>

DEAD is Lón  
Of Kilgarad ; make ye moan.  
Now must Erinn’s tribes deplore  
Loss of Lore and Schools o’erthrown.

Died hath Lón  
Of Kilgarad ; make ye moan.  
Loss of Lore and Schools o’erthrown  
Leave all Erinn’s borders lone.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Whitley Stokes, LL.D., “On the Calendar of Ængus.” Dublin : “Royal Irish Academy’s Transactions,” 1880 ; Note from Lebor breac. Ængus speaks of the “Hosts of the Books of Erinn.” The manuscript books were preserved in leather satchels, often ornamented.

<sup>2</sup> The varied repetition of the first line, and of the last two in each stanza, entitle St. Columba to be regarded, I believe, as the inventor of the Rondeau.

## DELIGHTS IN ERINN

ST. COLUMBA (A.D. 563)

LOVELY Edar's Hill<sup>1</sup> to me,  
 Ere we sail the pale, pale sea :  
 Billows breaking at its base,  
 Bare and lone its lofty face.

Lovely Edar's Hill to me,  
 After the bright-bosomed sea :  
 There to row our boatlet o'er  
 White waves racing round the shore.

Fleet my Curach's flying track,  
 When on Derry turns its back ;  
 I lament the happy havens,  
 Seeking Alba of the ravens.

My foot's in my tuneful Curach,  
 My heart bleeds in constant sorrow ;  
 Men must lead, or feebly follow,  
 Ignorance is blind and hollow.

There's an eye of gray  
 Looks back to Erinn far away :  
 While life lasts, 'twill see no more  
 Man or maid on Erinn's shore !

I gaze o'er the bitter brine,  
 From these oaken planks of mine,

<sup>1</sup> Benn Edair, *i.e.*, the Bluff of Edar, that Dublin hill which the Norsemen called Hoved, the Head, whence its present name of Howth.

Big tears wet that eye of gray—  
Seeking Erinn, far away.

Still on Erinn nests my mind—  
Lene and Linné left behind,  
On Ultonian mountains wild,  
Meath and Muman smooth and mild.

Many heroes eastward are,  
Many an ail, ill and scar,  
Many scant of garb and art,  
Many a hard, jealous heart.

Many, west, sweet apples shine,  
Many kings and princes fine,  
Many snowy-blossomed sloes,  
Many oak-trees, few the woes.

Sweet her birds, her clerics sage,  
Soft her youth are, wise is age—  
Noble men who glad the sight,  
Noble maids for nuptial rite.

Westward is sweet Brendan now,  
Colam, son of Crimtan's vow.  
(Westward shall fair Baithin be,  
And Adamnan after me.)<sup>1</sup>

Bear my greetings, noble youth!  
O'er to Congall's soul of truth,  
Bear my greetings home again,  
To Emania's king of men.

<sup>1</sup> This is probably an interpolation by a later bard.

Blessings bear, benedictions,  
From this heart of afflictions,  
Half for Erinn—seven times !  
Half for Alba's eastern climes.

Bear my blessing with thy sail  
To the Nobles of the Gael ;  
Let them never more give ear  
When Molaisi's words they hear.

Were it not Molaisi's speech,  
I should stand on Imlais' beach,  
Keeping constant watch, to ward  
Ail and ill from Erinn's sward.

Bear my blessing to the West,  
Broke my heart is in my breast ;  
Should a quick death be my bale,  
'Tis for great love of the Gael.

Gael, O Gael ! O name most dear !  
Wish I've none but that to hear ;  
Dear fair Cumin o'er the brine,  
Caindech dear, and Comgall mine.

Came all Alba's cess to me,  
From its centre to its sea,  
I would choose a better part—  
One house set in Derry's heart !

Dear for these things Derry fair :  
Purity and peace are there,  
Hosts are there of angels white,  
Moving through it, noon and night.

Derry mine ! my small oak-grove !  
 Little cell, my home, my love !  
 O thou Lord of lasting life,  
 Woe to him who brings it strife !

Dear is Durrow, Derry dear,  
 Dear Raphoe is, calm and clear,  
 Dear Drumholme, where sweet fruit swells,  
 Dear to me are Swords and Kells.

Dear too, westward, evermore,  
 Drumcliffe on Culkinny's shore—  
 O to see fair Foyle in might,  
 'Mid its woodlands were delight !

Delight is there.—There's delight  
 Where flash ocean's sea-gulls white—  
 Far I bear from Derry's grove,  
 Quiet peace and lasting love.

### CONALL DEAD

BY HIS SPOUSE (A D. 634).<sup>1</sup>

OCHAGÓN !<sup>2</sup>—here is the head  
 Of Conall of the keen blue blade :  
 The head of understanding clear,  
 The noble, dear, devoted head.

<sup>1</sup> Dean of Lismore's Book. Congall Claen, son of Scanlan, Prince of Ulster, was killed at the battle of Moira (Magh Rath), A.D. 634. Conall is the phonetic form in the Dean's Book.

<sup>2</sup> Ochagón is an exclamation of grief like Ullagone. It is written Ochagan.

Ochagón ! here are the eyes  
Of Conall's wise and generous head ;  
From these the lashes used to rise  
And flashes mild and manly sped.

Ochagón ! here is the mouth  
That north and south the poets praise,  
Of slender grace and apple-red,  
Like honey shed was Conall's mouth.

Ochagón ! here is the hand  
Bore Conall son of Scanlan's brand,  
The hand that strong in conflict strove,  
The hand of Conall—my first love !

Ochagón ! here is the side  
Where oftentimes ours nobly lay ;  
From Moyle's gray tide there came a hound  
With wile to wound that stainless side.

Ochagón ! here are the feet  
That ne'er gave way where warriors meet :  
Feet still first in fiery fray,  
The battle-bravest Conall's feet !

Och ! and here his Fort for aye,  
The strong cold Clay for all the years,  
Conall's Fort—where I deplore  
Whose tale is o'er—the House of Tears !

THE MOTHERS OF BETHLEHEM <sup>1</sup>

## FIRST WOMAN

WHY tear my love's son from me,  
 Me, who reared him ?  
 My breast fed him,  
 My womb bore him,  
 My veins did suckle him,  
 My heart he filled,  
 My life was he.  
 My death his taking,  
 My strength is gone ;  
 My voice is choked,  
 My eyes are blind.

## SECOND WOMAN

My son ye snatch,  
 I'm guiltless of ill,  
 But kill even me,  
 Kill not my son ;  
 My breasts are milkless,  
 My eyes are flowing,  
 My hands are trembling,  
 My body stumbles ;  
 My husband's sonless,  
 Myself am strengthless,  
 My life—a death.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Kuno Meyer, "Gaelic Journal," Dublin, May, 1891. Text and Translation. It is in "Rosg," Irish blank verse.



O God, my one son !  
 My fost'ring worthless,  
 My sickness sterile  
 Till Doomsday lost ;  
 My bosomed silenced,  
 My heart crushed.

## THIRD WOMAN

One ye seek slaying,  
 Numbers ye slaughter,  
 Nurslings smiting,  
 Fathers gashing—  
 Mothers murd'ring.  
 Hell ye were filling,  
 Heaven's gate closing,  
 Wantonly shedding  
 The blood of the righteous.

## FOURTH WOMAN.

Come to me, O Christ,  
 Take swiftly my soul,  
 Alike with my son.  
 Ah, Mary of might,  
 Mother of God's son,  
 See, sonless am I,  
 For *thy* son are slaughtered  
 My mind and my sense,  
 I'm made a mad woman  
 For want of my son ;  
 My heart is a death-froth,  
 Because of sad slaughter,  
 From now till the Judgment.

THE SONG OF SATAN<sup>1</sup>

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

GOLD is he—a sun-lit sky,  
 Silvern cup where wine is high,  
 Wisdom, which the angels praise—  
 Who obeys the Godhead nigh.

<sup>1</sup> St. Moling was at prayer, when a dignified youth in purple approached and said, "That is well, O Cleric." "Amen," said Moling. "Why dost thou not bless me?" says the youth. "Who art thou?" quoth Moling. "I am Christ, Son of God," says he. "That cannot be," says Moling, "when Christ used to come to converse with the servants of God, not in purple, nor royally did he come, but in the shape of the wretched, to wit, of the sick and of the lepers." "Is it unbelief thou hast in me?" asked the youth, "who is it seems to thee to be here?" "Meseems," says Moling, "that it is the Devil for my hurt." "Ill for thee is the unbelief," says the youth. "Well," says Moling, "[if thou art Christ] here is thy successor," raising the Gospel. "Raise it not, O Cleric, likelier 'tis I whom thou thinkest I am, the Man of Tribulation." He had sought to obtain the saint's blessing because its fragrance would be around him, as if one rose from a bath of honey. Failing, he asked a curse, because its venom would return on Moling. Then he asked how he might earn the blessing. "By service unto God," quoth Moling. "Woe is me," he said, "I have not chosen it." "Even a little reading," says Moling. "My reading saveth me not and helpeth me not." "Fasting then," says Moling. "Fasting I am since the world's beginning, not the better am I." "To make genuflections," says Moling. "I cannot bend forward, for backward are my knees." "Go forth," says Moling, "I cannot teach thee or save thee." Then the Devil said this lay.—Stokes, "Felire of *Ængus*." "Notes from Irish," cv.

Bird that's brought within the snare,  
Leaking bark that dangers dare,  
Broken branch that withered sways  
He who God's will disobeys.

Fragrant bough, and full of bloom,  
Honey cup of sweet perfume,  
Precious stone of shining rays,  
Who obeys the King of Doom.

Nut of dust, decayed and sour,  
Bitter crab-branch, void of flow'r,  
Leafless tree that hurts the gaze,  
Who the King's will disobeys.

Whoso hears the Lord divine,  
Summer-girt, a Sun shall shine,  
God's true image here is seen—  
Vessel clean of crystal fine.

He's a swift steed o'er the plain  
Who seeks God's gate to attain,  
He's a chariot 'neath a king  
Which shall bring gold gifts amain.

Sun to warm the heaven of bliss,  
Man for whom God thankful is!—  
Temple, light-lit ev'ry line,  
Shrine that sacred lips shall kiss.

Altar he where wine is shed,  
Round it choral song is said;—  
Cleanséd chalice he, behold!  
Chased and carved of purest gold.

## TRIUMPH OF FAITH

BY CÆNGUS THE CELE DE,<sup>1</sup> 8TH CENTURY

Low is Tara's tower <sup>2</sup>  
 Closed its sovran story—  
 Crowds with wisdom dower  
 Ardmagh's growing glory.

Lofty Laeré's splendour  
 Has, alas, gone under,—  
 Patrick's name, more tender,  
 Glows, a great world-wonder.

Faith has flow' red and flourished,  
 This shall fail us never,  
 Rathes which Gentiles nourished  
 Now are empty ever.

<sup>1</sup> Stokes, "The Calendar of Cængus." In reference to a passage relating to Cængus, Matthew Arnold writes: "A Greek epitaph could not show a finer perception of what constitutes propriety and felicity of style in compositions of this nature :

Cængus out of the assembly of heaven,  
 Here are his tomb and his bed ;  
 It is hence he went to death,  
 On the Friday, to holy heaven.  
 It is in Cluain Eidnech he was reared,  
 It is in Cluain Eidnech he was buried ;  
 In Cluain Eidnech of many crosses  
 He first read his psalms."

<sup>2</sup> Tara was the abode of the Over-King of Erin ; Rath-Cruachain, the fortress of the Kings of Connacht ; Emania was the northern royal city in the days of King Concobar, and Aillin the stronghold of Leinster.

Gone Rath Cruachain from us  
 Aillil's fame—a pity !  
 See in sov'reign promise  
 Cluain's excelling city.

Hark the chantings choral  
 Rise round Ciaran glorious,  
 Clonmicnóis its carol  
 Rolls in rime victorious.<sup>†</sup>

Never shall it perish—  
 God's love, night or morrow,  
 This cheer if you cherish  
 Shamed shall be all sorrow.

Aillin high and hoary  
 With its hosts is shrouded,—  
 Great is Brigit's glory,  
 Fair her city crowded.

Ruins strew the region  
 Once Emania's palace,—  
 Rome revives its legion  
 In Glenlocha's valleys.

Like a lamp of light is  
 Ferna great and glowing,  
 Lost in clouded night is  
 All the host of Eoghan.

<sup>†</sup> Ængus, who says he milked into his Calendar "the vast tome of Ambrose, Hilary's pious 'Sensus,' Jerome's 'Anti-graph,' Eusebius's 'Martyrology,'" also adds "the hosts of the books of Erinn." Foreign literature was cultivated, whilst native letters were fostered in Erinn—a thousand years ago.

Haughty heathen cities,  
Built for everlasting,  
Fall, and no one pities,  
Like to Lugai's wasting.

Pagan power is over,  
False its fair devotion ;  
God rules, Lord and Lover,  
Earth and sky and ocean !

Doncad, dread in danger,  
Bran, in battle bravest,  
Seek their graves, O stranger !  
Vainly help thou cravest.

Maelruain, nothing warlike,  
Served with faith and feeling,—  
At his tomb, the Star-like  
Every heart has healing.

Just the Judge is, truly,  
When his rule's regarded :  
Foes are punished duly,  
Friends, at last, rewarded.

Gone the despots ; gory  
Kings have downward drifted,  
Ciarans rise to glory—  
Cronans are uplifted.

Sunk the summits olden,  
Hewn by swords asunder :  
Raised the glens, as golden  
Peaks above the thunder !

## VIII.—GAEL AND NORSE

FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

### A SONG OF THE SEA, FOR THE SEA-KINGS OF DUBLIN

BY RUMANN<sup>1</sup>

STORM is on the plain of Lir,  
Bursting o'er its borders here :  
    Wind chases on the waters,  
    Stern Winter comes with slaughters  
Crossing sea-ways dusk and drear.

The ploughing of Lir's vast plain  
Brings to brave hosts pride and pain ;  
    Nought glows above that glory  
    Save its own shining story  
Told in Song's surpassing strain.

When the Wind blows from the East  
Billow spirits rousing feast,

<sup>1</sup> See : "Otia Merseiana," Vol. II., tr. and ed. by Dr. Kuno Meyer. This stirring poem was composed by Rumann, a Gaelic bard, on being challenged by the Dublin Norsemen to prove his power by composing a song on the characteristic theme they gave him—"The Sea." For a fuller account see Introduction and Preface. This is the first Sea-Song.

Driving past, they westward run  
 To shores of the setting Sun,  
 To the huge rough seas they haste.

When the Wind blows from the North  
 It drives hard bright billows forth,  
 To strands of the Southern World  
 Battling 'gainst the high sky hurl'd,—  
 Chanting loud the proud waves' worth.

When the Wind blows from the West,  
 O'er the strong salt current's crest,  
 It seeks the Tree of the Sun  
 Bearing isles its boughs upon,  
 Far in orient seas they rest.

When the Wind blows from the South  
 O'er great Saxon shields uncouth  
 Billows beat on Skit's<sup>†</sup> tall rock,  
 Calach meets their fury's shock.  
 Lashed with foam gray Shannon's mouth.

The high tide ! the ocean wide !  
 Sailing ships delighted glide !  
 The glad wind gaily whirling,  
 Race Inver's ripples, twirling ;  
 Swift the prows long seas divide !

Rest no more : rough, raging, high,  
 Tumbling breakers triumph cry ;  
 Swan-hued all Mac Miled shows,  
 Clothed his clann in shifting snows,  
 Queen Manannan's tresses fly !

<sup>†</sup> ? Scit = Sceilg, now Skellig.



Huge heaving ocean urges  
 Up bays the storming surges,  
     Wind blows, white winter slaughters  
     On Cantire's—Alba's waters,  
 Floods fill Sliav Dremon's gorges.

Save, O Son of God, from harm,  
 When the awful gales alarm,  
     Thou, Lord, Who low descended,  
     Save me, when all is ended,  
 From deep Hell's stern horrid storm.<sup>1</sup>

## THE HERMITAGE<sup>2</sup>

BY MARBAN

### I.

IN a Wood a lodge I own,  
 Of none, save God, beholden :  
 Here an Ash, a Hazel there  
 By one great Oak enfolden.

<sup>1</sup> This poem presents several of those "Kennings" which the Norse Skalds adopted. Thus the Plain of Lir is the Ocean; the tresses of Queen Manannan (*i.e.*, the Wife of Manannan Mac Lir—Lir's son) are the billows of the Sea. Dr. Meyer notes that when the bard says the Son of Miled (Milesius) is swan-hued he means Ireland is covered with snow.

<sup>2</sup> See : King and Hermit, a Colloquy between King Guaire of Aidne and his brother Marban, edited and translated by Dr. Kuno Meyer. Nutt, 1901. King Guaire, the Hospitable, reproaches his brother Marban, a hermit, with his privations. Marban details the beauties of his life, and the King concludes by saying he would prefer to renounce his Kingdom than Marban's comradeship.

Two door-posts which heath entwines  
 Lithe Woodbines tie together ;  
 Mast in mellow glades, at need,  
 Feed swine in wintry weather.

Small my lodge is, nor too small,  
 Its all known paths are pleasant ;  
 Roof-high, sings my Lady wise,  
 In black-bird guise at present.

Stags of Droma Rolach leap  
 Down the steep clear-bank water,  
 From the height, afar I see  
 Three Fields of Ancient Slaughter.

Lowly, little, hidden, home,  
 A Jewel-Rose possessing :  
 That which now I may not find  
 Time yet shall bring in blessing.

## II.

The veiling hair of tall Yews there  
 Lift the sky ;  
 Scene surprising, green Oaks rising  
 Storms defy.

An Apple-tree, full-fruited, free,  
 My Hostel stands,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Kuno Meyer aptly notes that here Marban anticipated Uhland's verse :

“ Bei einem Wirte wundermild  
 Da war ich jungst zu Gaste,  
 Ein goldner Apfel war sein Schild  
 An einem langen Aste.”

And nutty boughs bend to the house  
For willing hands.

By the mountain, one fair fountain—  
Drink of Kings !  
There mid cresses, through ivy tresses,  
The bright brook springs.

Round it wander, here and yonder,  
Badgers gray,  
Swine carousing, tall deer browsing,  
Kids at play.

Where 'tis nesting these are questing,  
Foxes come,  
Small the riot, soft and quiet,  
Happy home !

Princes royal, lovely, loyal,  
Seek me out :  
Water cleanest, leafage greenest,  
Speckled trout.

Ruddy rowans, golden gowans,  
Sloes are there ;  
Berry bowers, food in showers,  
Flagstone bare.

Honey even God has given,  
Eggs and roots,  
Sweet Strawberries, Apples, Cherries,  
Fair-hued fruits.

Red and purple blooms of Whortle  
Claim applause,  
Wild herbs verdant blend with ardent  
Hips and Haws !

A nut-mead drink, where Blue-bells blink  
'Mid pliant Rush,  
Where saplings dangle, a pleasant tangle  
Of briar and bush.

When Summer strews its cloak of hues,  
Then the dells  
Yield earth nuts, mint and marjoram  
And fragrant smells.

Music, song, from red-breast throng  
Thrill the boughs,  
Thrushes wooing, cushats cooing,  
Above my house.

Bees hum o'er us, crickets chorus—  
Earth's small choirs !  
Wild geese soaring, torrents roaring  
At Samain's fires.

In hazel brightly, small wrens sprightly  
Shake with song,  
Black-cap, pecker, flit and flicker,  
A tuneful throng.

White wings fare on, sea-gulls, heron ;  
Cuckoos breathe,  
The plover's crying—no sad sighing !  
O'er red heath.

Kine are lowing, Summer's glowing,—  
O Time of Times !  
Not tiring, toiling, marching, moiling,  
In crowded climes.

A Voice of breezes the forest seizes—  
That great green cloud !  
Rivers falling, cygnets calling,  
Low tunes and loud.

My cress of beauty they give in duty,  
No hireling tryste ;  
Not less loyal than tribute royal,  
In sight of Christ.

Thine the pleasure of priceless treasure  
Peerless, proud ;  
Thanks I render for what the Sender  
My Christ allowed.

Free from jar of strife or war,  
My home has stood,  
Thanks, my King ! for every thing  
For each is good.

THE BLACKBIRD'S SONG<sup>1</sup>

A.D. 850

GREAT woods gird me now around,  
 With sweet sound merle sings to me :  
 My much-lined pages over  
 Sings its lover minstrelsie.

Soft it sings its measured song,  
 Hid among the tree-tops green :  
 May God on high thus love me,  
 Thus approve me, all unseen.

<sup>1</sup> "Reliquie Celtiche. Il manoscritto irlandese di S. Gallo." Firenze, Torino, Roma, 1872. Cavaliere Nigra found the original Irish verses on the margin of an ancient manuscript of St. Gall's. The monk had been copying, when the merle (or blackbird) sang, and he paused to write this little lay. See Introduction. Love of animals was a characteristic of the Irish saints. Various charming anecdotes show this. St. Ciaran of Saighir (the first resident native saint) is related to have formed his first community of animals: a furious wild boar came to assist him, then a fox, a wolf, a badger, and a fawn. Thus he made a little monastery in the forest, amongst pagans. When the fox gave way to appetite, and carried off the saint's shoes to gnaw, the badger brought him back. "O brother," said Ciaran gently, "why has thou done this theft, so unbecoming to a monk? for there are wholesome water and food for the community, and if thy nature made thee prefer meat, God would have made it thee of the tree-bark around." Here is another example from the *Lebor Breac* (Stokes, "Calendar of Ængus," Note xl.). "Maelanfaid saw, on a day, a little bird a-wailing and lamenting. 'Ah, my God,'

## THE HEAVENLY PILOT :

CORMAC, KING-BISHOP OF CASHEL (837-903)

WILT Thou steer my frail black bark  
 O'er the dark broad ocean's foam ?  
 Wilt Thou come, Lord, to my boat,  
 Where afloat, my will would roam ?  
 Thine the mighty : Thine the small :  
 Thine to mark men fall, like rain ;  
 God ! wilt Thou grant aid to me  
 Who come o'er th' upheaving main ?

quoth he, ' what has happened here ? I vow,' quoth he, ' I will not eat food till it is revealed to me.' So while he was there he beheld an angel (coming) to him. ' That is well, O cleric,' saith the angel, ' let this not give thee grief any more. Molua Mac Ocha is dead, and therefore it is that the living creature bewail him, for he never killed a living creature, whether small or great. So that not more of the people bewail him than the other living creatures, and the little bird which thou seest.'

' " Book of Leinster." In O'Curry's " Manners and Customs," Vol. III., p. 388. This Irish poem, composed in the ninth century, anticipates the central thought of Tennyson's exquisite verses, " Crossing the Bar." O'Curry says that Cormac, who wrote the " Psalter of Cashel," has always been considered " one of the most distinguished scholars of Europe of his time. Besides the knowledge he is recorded to have acquired of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the British, Saxon, and Danish " (*rectè* Norse) " and other northern languages, he is regarded as having been one of the greatest Gaedhelic scholars that ever lived."

NIALL'S DIRGE <sup>1</sup>

BY QUEEN GORMLAI, HIS SPOUSE, A.D. 919

MOVE, O monk, thy foot away,  
Lift it now from Niall's side,  
Over-much thou'st cast the clay  
Where I would, with him, abide.

Over-long thy task, this day,  
Strewing clay o'er Niall slain ;  
Tread no further, friend, delay,—  
Raise it not to meet the plain.

Ah, close not for aye the grave,  
Cleric sad, with solemn lay ;  
From o'er Niall bright and brave  
Move, O monk, thy foot away.

Golden King, not thus wert bound  
Had I power thy strength to stay,  
Leave his pillar, leave his mound,  
Move thy foot, O monk, away.

I am Gormlai, who, in gloom,  
Sing for him the sorrowing lay ;  
Stand not there upon his tomb,  
Move, O monk, thy foot away.

<sup>1</sup> The Dean of Lismore's Book, edited by the Rev. Thomas McLauchlan. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas. Niall was slain in battle by the Norsemen, A.D. 919. See account of the tragic fate of the "most unhappy Lady Gormlai," in Appendix.



THE RUINED NEST<sup>1</sup>

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

SAD is yonder blackbird's song,  
Well I know what wrought it wrong ;  
Whosoe'er the deed has done,  
Now its nestlings all are gone.

Such a sorrow I, too, know  
For such loss, not long ago ;  
Well, O bird ! I read thy state  
For a home laid desolate.

How thy heart has burned, nigh broke,  
At the rude and reckless stroke !  
To lay waste thy little nest  
Seems to cowboys but a jest.

Thy clear note called together  
Flutt'ring young in new feather ;  
From thy nest comes now not one—  
O'er its mouth the nettle's gone.

Sudden came the callous boys,  
Their deed all thy young destroys :  
Thou and I one fate deplore—  
For my children are no more.

<sup>1</sup> The original of this touching poem is found in "the famous fourteenth-century manuscript, known as the Lebor Breac," writes Prof. Kuno Meyer, who first edited and translated it for the "Gaelic Journal," 1890. It was composed long before the fourteenth century.

By thy side there used to be  
 Thy sweet mate from o'er the sea ;  
 The herd's net ensnared her head—  
 She is gone from thee, and dead.

O Ruler of high heaven !  
 Thou'st laid our loads uneven :  
 For our friends on ev'ry side  
 'Mid their mates and children bide.

Hither came hosts of Faery  
 To waste our home unwary ;  
 Though they left no wound to tell  
 Brunt of battle were less fell.

Woe for wife ; for children, woe !  
 I, in sorrow's shadow, go ;  
 Not a trace of them I had  
 Hence my heavy heart is sad.

## THE SEA-MAIDEN'S VENGEANCE <sup>1</sup>

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

A GREAT gallant king of yore  
 Ruled shore and sea of Erinn ;  
 Noble then all sections shone  
 'Neath Rigdon's son of daring.

<sup>1</sup> "Book of Ballymote." In "Atlantis," Vol. IV. O'Curry : note, pp. 235-240. This singular lay, if presented in German, might pass for a Teutonic poem. It cannot be doubted that it was owing to Irish teaching that a pupil of St. Gall's intro-

O'er the mane of slow gray seas,  
With the breeze, lay his hoar way ;  
To behold his foreign friend  
He would wend north to Norway.

Sped his splendid vessels three,  
When the sea calmed its motion ;  
Till they, sailing, sudden stop  
On the ridgy top of ocean.

They refused to wend away—  
Fixed they lay, no where faring !  
Then into the dark dread deeps  
Ruad leaps, greatly daring.

When he dived for their release,  
Through the sea's surging waters ;  
There he found the forms divine  
Of its nine beauteous daughters.

These with clear soft accents said,  
It was they stay'd his sailing :  
That to leave nine maidens sweet  
Were a feat few prevail in.

He with these nine nymphs remained,  
Where there reigned shade nor sadness ;  
'Neath the waters, where no wave  
Ever gave gloom to gladness.

duced rime into German. How far its literature has been otherwise affected is insufficiently known. It would be very curious if the germ of the legend of the Lorelei had been carried and naturalized on the Rhine by St. Goar (Guaire), or some other of its many Irish pilgrims.

One of these his bride became,  
 Still his fame forced him forward ;  
 But he vow'd to greet her lips  
 When his ships came from nor'ward.

Once on board, he bade them sail  
 Past the pale billows breaking ;  
 And, with one bound, make their course  
 To the Norse of quick speaking.

O'er the salt sea then they rode,  
 And abode, sweet the story,  
 Till the seventh glad year ends  
 With their friends, great in glory.

Ruad then ran out, once more,  
 On the hoar salt sea faring ;  
 Speeding forth his ships to reach  
 The bright far beach of Erinn.

Warped and wrong the royal will,—  
 Solemn still is promise spoken :  
 He should have gone to the maid  
 As he said, nor pledge have broken.

When the Prince of Tuired's name  
 Unto Muired's<sup>1</sup> borders came,  
 Around the shore—foul his fame !  
 A sound arose of sad acclaim.

'Twas the sweet-voiced women's song  
 Borne along in music's motion,  
 Following Ruad's fleeing sail  
 O'er wail of wave-worn ocean.

<sup>1</sup> The region between Howth and the Boyne.

Sailing, in bronze boat, they came—  
 No plank-frame, made by mortal—  
 Those nine maidens, fair and fierce,  
 Till they pierce Ollbin's<sup>1</sup> portal.

Dire and dread the deed then done  
 There by one, 'mid the water,  
 Ruad's son—her own—she slew,  
 Vengeance knew, sweet in slaughter !

Then, upraising her high hand,  
 Forth she cast him on the strand,—  
 Shrank the shore and shudd'ring foam  
 From King Ruad's welcome home !

## LAY OF NORSE-IRISH SEA-KINGS<sup>2</sup>

ARTUR MAC GURCAICH, THE BLIND

FAIR our fleet at Castle Sweyn—  
 Glad good news for Innisfail !—  
 Never rode on bounding brine  
 Barks so fine with soaring sail.

Tall men urge the ships and steer  
 Our light, leaping, valiant van ;  
 Each hand holds a champion's spear—  
 Gay of cheer is ev'ry man.

<sup>1</sup> Mouth of the River Ollbin, now Dilvin.

<sup>2</sup> Dean of Lismore's Book, pp. 117-151. Sweyn has been Gaelicized Suivne and Sweeney—but this is a confusion of the Norse with a somewhat similar Gaelic name.

Coats of black the warriors wear  
On the barks with tree-mast tall ;  
Broad the brown belts that they bear,  
Norse and Nobles are they all.

Sword-hilts gold and iv'ry gleam  
On our barks with banners high ;  
Hung on hooks the bucklers beam,  
Sheaves of spears are standing nigh.

Purple wings our ships expand  
O'er the fleckt and flowing wave ;  
'Mid the masts the champions stand  
Fit for foray, mild and brave.

Blue is the sea surrounding  
Prows o'er the billows bounding ;  
Swords in their sheaths are glowing,  
The lances thrill for throwing !

Fair are the forms reclining  
On the cushioned couches high,  
Wives in their beauty shining  
'Neath the chequered canopy.

Silks in varied fold on fold,  
Clothe our king-ship sailing fast ;  
Silks of purple splendour hold  
Wells of wind at every mast.

There is seen no hardened hand—  
Waist of worker belted tight ;  
High-voiced heroes hold command,  
Fond of music, play, and fight.

Ne'er did Finn or Fianna know  
Gallant chiefs of deeds more grand,  
Nor could Erinn braver show  
Than this fair-haired battle band.

Swifter ship of ships there's none—  
None shall go, and none has gone ;  
Here comes nor sigh nor sorrow  
Night or noon, day or morrow.

Fleeter bark of barks ne'er fared—  
Full of princely folk she goes ;  
Gold with bards they've, gen'rous, shared  
While the foam-topt ocean flows.

Who took this fleet together  
Close to the high hill heather ?  
Dauntless he ; he braves the blast—  
Claims his right with upraised mast.

Sail the ship, Ion, son of Sweyn !  
O'er the hard-backed brilliant brine ;  
Raise aloft its conq'ring crown  
O'er the billows' fret and frown.

Many welcomes, many smiles,  
Greet our ship, 'mid Alba's isles :  
Bards, the narrow seas among,  
Welcome us with harp and song.

Then we came to Castle Sweyn,  
Like a bright hawk o'er the brine ;  
By that rock we raised the fight,  
Facing foes with fierce delight.

There we pierced the foreign foes  
As the stinging serpent goes ;  
Sore we smote them, men and lords,  
With our thin, sharp, shearing swords,

Chanting Sweyn-son's battle-song,  
All the surging seas along ;  
Till the shore-rock tall and black,  
Over ocean sends it back.

Vain their spears and swords and darts,—  
Our brown bucklers hold our hearts ;  
Rocky Rathlin,<sup>1</sup> rousing, hears  
Singing of our swords and spears.

That thin sword is Europe's best,  
That swift spear serves each behest ;  
Where were shield safe in the world  
When the victor weapon's hurled ?

Son of Sweyn, whose ways are wide,  
These keen arms keep at his side ;  
Be it now the blind bard's care  
Him to sing, strong, sage, and fair.

<sup>1</sup> An isle off the north coast of Ireland.



## “TAKE THESE HEADS”

Having achieved their feats, the Children of Tuirenn sailed homeward, wounded to death, Brian alone upstanding. At last he spoke. “I see Benn Edair, and Dun Tuirenn, and Tara of the Kings.” “We should be full of health could we see that,” said another: “for thine honour’s love, O brother,” said they, “take these heads on thy breast that we may see Erinn afar, and we care not be it death or life thereafter.” And one spoke this lay: <sup>1</sup>

TAKE these heads upon thy breast,—  
 Son of Tuirenn brave and best,  
 Torch of valour, void of guile!—  
 That we may see Erinn’s isle.

Raise upon thy shoulder, too,  
 These our heads, thou champion true!  
 That from o’er the waters, we  
 Usna, Taltin, Tara, see.

Boyne’s Bru <sup>2</sup> and Dublin darkling,  
 Freman and Tlacta sparkling,  
 Liffey’s plain, and Bregia’s air,  
 And the hills round Taltin’s Fair.

If I saw Benn Edair forth,  
 And Dun Tuirenn in the north,—  
 Welcome then were death to me,  
 Were it death with agony.

<sup>1</sup> The Fate of the Children of Tuircann, “Atlantis,” Vol. IV.  
 See Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Brugh: a fort.

THE FAIRY FOREWARNING AT  
CLONTARF <sup>1</sup>

Dublaing<sup>2</sup> O'Hartagan wished to assist his friend Prince Murcad, at Clontarf, though he had been banished by King Brian. Dublaing's spirit-bride, *leanàn sighe*, covered him with the cloak of invisibility, and he made havoc of the Norse-Irish round Murcad. "Methinks I hear the battle-blows of Dublaing, but I see him not," said Murcad. "'Tis fitting I should put off what prevents thee seeing me," said Dublaing, and he did. Then they retired to consult with Aeibel, his spirit-bride, who warned Prince Murcad that he, his son, his father the King, and many chiefs would die that day. Thus they spake :

SPIRIT-BRIDE.

"THOUGH thy heart be high, O Love,  
When the hosts move forth to fight,  
Though thy face be flushed, its glow  
Change shall know, ere come the night."

PRINCE MURCAD.

"I could tell, ere that befall,  
Story small, indeed, but true :  
Fear for fate of life in war  
Ne'er shall mar my face's hue.

<sup>1</sup> "Proceedings of the Ossianic Society," Vol. II., p. 99. Dublin, 1855. The poem was of course composed some time after the battle (1014), but the presence of Spirits is mentioned in the prose account, "The Wars of the Gael and Gall." The Orkney Norse also saw phantom omens.

<sup>2</sup> Dublaing, pronounced Dulaing.

“If we die, so die the Gall—  
 Gael shall all their strongholds share ;  
 None may count the crowded dead  
 Hewn beneath my red sword there.”

## SPIRIT-BRIDE.

“Thou, O Dublaing ! keep from fight  
 Till the light of morning’s ray :  
 Thou shalt live an hundred years,—  
 Shun the spears for but one day.”

## DUBLAING.

“I would not quit Murcad bold.  
 Not for silver—not for gold ;  
 Nor would bear dishonour’s breath  
 For inevitable death.

“All the steeds in Lurc that live  
 He would for my body give :  
 I that body’s bulwark bring  
 For the heir of Erinn’s king.”

## SPIRIT-BRIDE.

“Fall shall Murcad—Brian shall fall—  
 Fall in one career, shall all,—  
 Gory the field of sorrow  
 With haughty blood to-morrow.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The remarkable resemblance between this dramatic poem and “Lochiel’s Warning” is obvious. In Campbell’s poem a Wizard foretells the doom ; these lines might be a free paraphrase of the last Irish stanza :

“For a field of the dead rushes red on my sight,  
 And the clans of Culloden are scattered in fight.”

Lochiel’s answer gives the very spirit of Muacad’s refusal.

## HOLY SPIRIT

MAELISU <sup>1</sup>

HOLY Spirit of Love  
 In us, round us, above ;  
 Holy Spirit, we pray  
 Send, sweet Jesus ! this day.

Holy Spirit, to win  
 Body and soul within,  
 To guide us that we be  
 From ills and illness free,

From sin and demons' snare,  
 From Hell and evils there,  
 O Holy Spirit, come !  
 Hallow our heart, Thy home.

His clan come like reapers ; woe to his enemy. Though their ranks perish,

“Lochiel, untainted by flight or by chains,  
 While the kindling of life in his bosom remains,  
 Shall victor exult or in death be laid low.”

Again, Lochiel offers a mantle to the Wizard. “Draw,” he says :

“This mantle, to cover the phantoms of fright.”

The coincidences are such that I am induced to think Campbell, who showed his sympathy with Ireland in some fine poems, may have heard this Irish legend, and taken its suggestive spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Maelisu, grandson of Broilcan, of Derry, died in the year 1038. “Mael-Isu” means “Client of Jesus” (literally, the “Tonsured of Jesus”).

## DEUS MEUS

## MAELISU

*Deus meus adiuva me,*<sup>1</sup>

Give me Thy love, O Christ, I pray,

Give me Thy love, O Christ, I pray,

*Deus meus adiuva me.*

*In meum cor ut sanum sit,*<sup>2</sup>

Pour loving King, Thy love in it,

Pour loving King, Thy love in it,

*In meum cor ut sanum sit.*

*Domine, da ut peto a te,*<sup>3</sup>

O, pure bright sun, give, give to-day,

O, pure bright sun, give, give to-day,

*Domine, da ut peto a te.*

*Hanc spero rem et quæro quam*<sup>4</sup>

Thy love to have where'er I am,

Thy love to have where'er I am,

*Hanc spero rem et quæro quam.*

*Tuum amorem sicut uis,*<sup>5</sup>

Give to me swiftly, strongly, this,

Give to me swiftly, strongly, this,

*Tuum amorem sicut uis.*

<sup>1</sup> My God, assist Thou me.

<sup>2</sup> Into my heart that it sound may be.

<sup>3</sup> Lord, grant Thou what I ask of Thee.

<sup>4</sup> This thing I hope and seek of Thee.

<sup>5</sup> Thy love as Thou mayst will.

*Quæro, postulo, peto a te*<sup>1</sup>

That I in heaven, dear Christ, may stay,  
That I in heaven, dear Christ, may stay,

*Quæro, postulo, peto a te.*

*Domine, Domine, exaudi me,*<sup>2</sup>

Fill my soul, Lord, with Thy love's ray,  
Fill my soul, Lord, with Thy love's ray,

*Domine, Domine, exaudi me.*

*Deus meus adiuva me,*

*Deus meus adiuva me.*<sup>3</sup>

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT<sup>4</sup>

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

FOUR men stood beside a grave,  
Alexander's, great and brave ;  
There the song of truth they said  
O'er the mighty monarch dead.

"Yesterday," the first man spoke,  
"All the world lay 'neath his yoke,  
Myriad hosts were then his own,  
To-day he lieth all alone."

<sup>1</sup> I seek, I claim, and I ask of Thee.

<sup>2</sup> Lord, Lord, hearken to me.

<sup>3</sup> This poem, written on the margin of "Lebor Breac," p. 101, is quoted by Dr. Whitley Stokes, "Calendar of Ængus," clxxxv. Alliteration is observed in the Latin lines. In the first verse it seems obtained by the reading "ad-iuva" and in the fifth "amorem" alliterates with "uis" [vis].

<sup>4</sup> The Dean of Lismore's Book, edited by the Rev. T. McLauchlan. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas.

The second : " Yesterday he hurl'd  
 Royal edicts o'er the world,  
 Rode the earth from rim to rim  
 To-day earth rideth over him."

" Yesterday," so spake the third,  
 " All things hung upon his word,  
 Naught save his of earth was found,  
 To-day, scarce seven feet of ground."

" Alexander, brave and bold,  
 Alexander treasured gold"—  
 Thus the fourth man said his say—  
 " The gold, it treasures him to-day."

Like the Palm o'er all the trees,  
 Like Leviathan in seas,  
 Like the Moon above the stars,  
 Shone the Conqueror of wars.

Like as Sion to all hills,  
 Like the Ocean to the rills,  
 Like the Eagle's victor head,  
 Like the Lion on his dead :

Greatest he of all things great,  
 Loftiest on earth his state,  
 Mightiest Man that ever trod,  
 None above him,—only God !

Truth they told beside the grave,  
 Of the High King bold and brave,  
 Not as foolish dames deplore,  
 Sang the wisdom of the Four.

## THE VISION OF VIANDS

ANJAR MAC CONGLINNE<sup>1</sup> (TWELFTH CENTURY)

In a slumber visional,  
 Wonders apparitional  
 Sudden shone on me :  
 Was it not a miracle ?  
 Built of lard, a coracle  
 Swam a sweet milk sea.

<sup>1</sup> "The Vision of Mac Conglinne," edited by Professor Kuno Meyer, and David Nutt. London: Nutt, 1894. See Appendix. The Irish metre is reproduced. This curious poem evidently suggested passages in "The Land of Cokaigne." Compare the first two stanzas with these verses :

"Up a river of sweet milk,  
 Where is plenty great of silk,  
 When the summer's day is hot,  
 The young nunnes taketh a boat  
 And doth ham forth in that rivere,  
 Both with oares and with steere."

Again, compare with the third, fourth, and fifth stanzas these verses :

"There is a well fair Abbey  
 Of white monks and of grey :  
 There beth bowrs and halls,  
 All of pasties beth the walls,  
 Of flesh, of fish, and a rich meat  
 The likefullest that man may eat,  
 Flouren cakes beth the shingles all  
 Of church, cloister, bowrs and hall,  
 The pinnes beth fat puddings  
 Rich meat to princes and kings."



With high hearts heroical,  
 We stepped in it, stoical,  
     Braving billow-bounds ;  
 Then we rode so dashingly,  
 Smote the sea so splashingly,  
 That the surge sent, washingly,  
     Honey up for grounds.

Ramparts rose of custard all  
 Where a castle muster'd all  
     Forces o'er the lake ;  
 Butter was the bridge of it,  
 Wheaten meal the ridge of it,  
     Bacon every stake.

Strong it stood, and pleasantly  
 There I entered presently  
     Hying to the hosts ;  
 Dry beef was the door of it,  
 Bare bread was the floor of it,  
     Whey-curds were the posts.

Old cheese-columns happily,  
 Pork that pillared sappily,  
     Raised their heads aloof ;

The Irish original was at least partly rimed into Lowland Scotch, judging by an old verse I heard in Ulster, concerning a house :

“Weel I mind the biggin' o't,  
 Bread and cheese were the door cheeks  
 And pancakes the riggin' o't.”

This forms part of the Jacobite song : “This is no my ain house,” but may come from an older song.

While curd-rafters mellowly  
Crossing cream-beams yellowly,  
Held aloft the roof.

Wine in well rose sparkingly,  
Beer was rolling darklingly,  
Bragget brimmed the pond.  
Lard was oozing heavily,  
Merry malt moved wavily,  
Through the floor beyond.

Lake of broth lay spicily,  
Fat froze o'er it icily,  
'Tween the wall and shore ;  
Butter rose in hedges high,  
Cloaking all its edges high  
White lard blossomed o'er.

Apple alleys bowering,  
Pink-topped orchards flowering,  
Fenced off hill and wind ;  
Leek tree forests loftily,  
Carrots branching tuftily,  
Guarded it behind.

Ruddy warders rosily  
Welcomed us right cosily  
To the fire and rest ;  
Seven coils of sausages,  
Twined in twisted passages,  
Round each brawny breast.

Their chief I discover him,  
Suet mantle over him,  
    By his lady bland ;  
Where the cauldron boiled away,  
The Dispenser toiled away,  
    With his fork in hand.

Good King Cathal, royally,  
Surely will enjoy a lay,  
    Fair and fine as silk ;  
From his heart his woe I call,  
When I sing heroical,  
How we rode, so stoical,  
    O'er the Sea of Milk.



## IX.—GAEL AND NORMAN, ETC.

FROM THE THIRTEENTH TO THE SEVENTEENTH  
CENTURIES

IN THE HEART OF JESUS

MUIREADACH (ALBANACH) O'DALY<sup>1</sup>

CIRCA 1215

THAT in Jesus' heart should be  
One like me is marvellous ;  
Sin has made my life a loss  
But His Cross shall speak for us.

<sup>1</sup> The bard had a romantic history. In 1213 O'Donnell's steward entered Connacht to collect tribute. He acted so offensively to the bard at Lissadill, that the latter smote him, and he fell. The poet fled for refuge to the De Burghos, thence to the O'Briens, thence (O'Donnell pursuing) to Dublin, whence he was conveyed to Scotland, where he resided until he succeeded in making his peace. These poems were preserved in Scotland in the Dean of Lismore's Book, and the editor, the Rev. Mr. McLauchlan says Muireadach Albanach (*i.e.*, the Albanian) was the ancestor of the Mac Vurrichs, bards to the Mac Donalds of Clanranald. He was contemporary with Cahal Mor of the Red Hand (O'Connor of Connacht) who addressed a poem to him, which has been translated by Professor Blackie.

As of old, O Jesus sweet !  
 Bless my feet and hands Thine own ;  
 Of thy bounty, bless to good  
 These my blood, and flesh, and bone.

Never now I keep from ill  
 Since my body will take part ;  
 Make it hallowed by Thy love  
 From above, in head and heart.

Sweet and great one ! grant relief,  
 All my grief take quite away ;  
 So that ere my life be spent  
 Thou'lt have sent and cleared my way.

### TEACH, O TRINITY !

BY MUIREADACH (ALBANACH) O'DALY

TEACH Thou me, O Trinity !  
 O Lord, whose speech is sweet,  
 Teach my tongue, O Trinity !  
 Bless it with blessing-meet.

Holy o'er the heavens free  
 Make strong my arms and sure,  
 In my heart abide with me,  
 Thou Prince of all things pure.

Take my heart and teach my hand,  
 So may'st Thou, king of truth !  
 Eye and ear and voice command,—  
 Bless Thou my lips with ruth.

These my lips which wrought thee wrong  
Nor warring words reproved,  
This my tongue which lapsed too long—  
Bless these, my soul's Beloved !

Thee, O Trinity, from Thee  
Ah, Lord, grant healing balm,  
Like a fair and fine oak tree  
With cankered core I am.

Yet of blood I bear no stain,  
No stain of spoil I bear ;  
Then, for Mary's love, O deign  
Give answer to my prayer.

Thou, who gavest prayer its birth,  
Is't wrong to pray Thee now ?  
Not the kings or lords of earth  
Can comfort give, but Thou.

None such knowledge sweet hath given  
But Thou, O Lord ! alone—  
Thine is truth, O King of heaven !  
No wisdom like thine own.

If I on the right way bide  
No less my vow commands,  
If I stray, be Thou my guide,  
Who am within Thy hands.

Clay nor rock can refuge yield  
From fire of doom above,  
Thou, Thyself, shalt be my shield  
And guard me, with Thy love.

## THE HARP THAT RANSOMED

BY GILLABRIDE MAC CONMIDE,<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1230

BRING my King's harp here to me,  
 That my grief, forgot, may flee ;  
 Full soon shall pass man's sadness  
 When wakes that voice of gladness.

Noble he, and skilled in all,  
 Who owned this tree<sup>2</sup> musical ;  
 Many lofty songs he sang  
 Whilst its soft sweet numbers rang.

Many jewels he bestowed,  
 Seated, where this fair gem glowed ;  
 Oft he guerdoned the beholder,  
 Its curved neck on his shoulder.

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced (and now written) Mac Conmee. This bard was a native of Ulster, but was known as Albanach, the Albanian (or Scottish) because of his oft sojourning in Alba. Commissioned by Prince Doncad O'Brian to win back, for a price, the harp which had been sent as ransom for the return of the poet O'Daly, he failed in his object. The "jewel of the O'Briens," a small or hand-harp, would not be surrendered for flocks of sheep. At last, the bard called for it and touched its chords whilst he sang to it this farewell song. O'Curry thought it may have been taken to Westminster by Edward I., and suggested the insertion of the harp on the Irish escutcheon, under Henry VIII. He argued that this may possibly be the instrument now erroneously called "Brian Borumha's Harp."

<sup>2</sup> Tree, *i.e.*, harp, because of its wood, a bold synonym.



Dear the hand that smote the chords  
 Of the slight, smooth, polished boards ;  
 Bright and brave, the tall youth played,  
 True his hand, for music made.

When his hand o'er this would roam—  
 Music's meet and perfect home—  
 Then its great soft tender sigh  
 Bore away man's misery.

When the curled Dalcassians came,  
 Guests, within his hall of fame,  
 Then its deep voice, woke again,  
 Welcomed Cashel's comely men.

All men admired the Maiden,  
 Banba <sup>1</sup> with praise was laden :  
 "Doncad's harp," they all exclaim,  
 "The fair, fragrant tree of fame !"

"O'Brian's harp ! clear its call  
 O'er the feast in Gabran's hall ;  
 How the heir of Gabran's Kings  
 Shook deep music from its strings !"

Son of Gael, of weapon sharp,  
 Wins not now O'Brian's harp :  
 Son of stranger shall not gain  
 From this gem its Spirit's strain.

What woe to come a pleader  
 For harp of Lim'rick's Leader !

<sup>1</sup> Ireland.

What woe to come a-dreaming  
That flocks were thy redeeming !

Sweet thy full melodious voice,  
Maid, who wast a Monarch's choice :  
Thy blithe voice would woe beguile,  
Maiden of my Erinn's isle !

Could I live the yew tree's time  
In this deer-loved eastern clime,  
I would serve her gladly still,—  
The Chief's harp of Brendon Hill.

Dear to me—of right it should—  
Alba's ever-winsome wood,  
Yet, though strange, more dear I love  
This one tree of Erinn's grove !

### THE EXILED HEAD

GILLABRIDE MAC CONMIDE,<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1260

DEATH of my heart !—Brian's head  
Far in foreign land is laid :  
High head of dauntless daring  
An Orphan Isle is Erinn.

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced Mac Connice (sometimes made Mac Namee). He was Chief Bard of Ulster, and friend of King Brian O'Neill, whose claim to the Over-Kingship was contested by an O'Brien. Brian was killed at the battle of Down, in 1260, by the Norman Lord Justice Stephen de Longe Espée. These are the first verses of a lengthy poem, in "Miscellany of the Celtic Society," Dublin, 1849.

To their king of Saxon they  
 Bore our Gael king's head away ;  
 What could enemy wish more ?—  
 Thou, O Head ! art triumphed o'er.

This peers all that foes have wrought—  
 Brian's head to London brought !  
 Now hath Fate fulfilled all woes,—  
 Brian's head lies 'mid his foes !

### LOVER AND ECHO

BY CARROL O'DALY<sup>1</sup> (14TH CENTURY)

TELL me, Echo fair !  
 From the air above  
 Since thou knowest, why  
 I to sorrow clove ?  
 Echo : Love.

Love !—O no, of course,  
 That source ceased to flow ;  
 That I knew of yore  
 Now no more I know.  
 Echo : No ?

<sup>1</sup> Hardiman says that this poem "is generally attributed to Carroll O'Daly, of Corcamro, Co. Clare, who died about the end of the fourteenth century." Hence this should be one of the first—possibly the very first—Echo-poems in European literature.

Lo, if Fortune hard  
Will thy bard oppress,  
Is there—tell me sure  
Cure for my distress?  
Echo: Yes.

Sage and witty Sprite  
Rightly now reply,  
Since there's healing calm  
Choose what balm should I?  
Echo: Die.

Die!—if so 'tis so,  
Death puts woe away;  
Since 'twill cure my ail  
Then all hail I say.  
Echo: Icy.

I say thrice all hail  
None will wail my fate;  
But tell none my tale,  
This I supplicate.  
Echo: Like Kate.

Kate! the devil flee  
With thee, mocking Sprite!  
Kate's unkind, and care  
Beareth no respite.  
Echo: Spite!

If Narcissus such  
 Jealous touch did wake,  
 'Tis not strange that he  
 Left thee for a lake.  
 Echo : Ache !

Aching sobbing sighs  
 Still I daily hear ;  
 What can cause thy cries,  
 Is not comfort near.  
 Echo : Ne'er.

Shall Narcissus hold  
 Old Love against the new ?  
 Other fate may fall—  
 Always needst not rue.  
 Echo : True !

Blessings on thy Voice,  
 I rejoice anew !  
 Since thou far wilt fare,  
 Farewell and adieu.  
 Echo : Adieu !<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As Earl Gerald of Desmond, O'Daly's contemporary, wrote poems in Norman-French, it is not surprising that O'Daly should use a French word. French and Irish were the court-languages in Dublin. It is to be remembered that Sir John Davis, King James the First's Attorney-General in Ireland, wrote in law-French as well as in English.

WOMANKIND<sup>1</sup>

## GERALD THE BARD, FOURTH EARL OF DESMOND

SHAME, who overleaps his steed,  
 Rightly rede and understand ;  
 Love with land goes swift behind,  
 Weigh the worth of Womankind.

Them may malisons enfold,  
 Though of old we used to mix,  
 Youth, their tricks are as the wind—  
 Ware the wiles of Womankind.

He who early looks abroad  
 Shall a load of ills discern,  
 Wouldst thou learn the worst to find,  
 Watch the heart of Womankind.

Married man with witless wife,  
 Fails in strife with foreign foe ;  
 Bad for hart is belling hind,  
 Worse the tongue of Womankind.

Dame who hears but does not heed—  
 Walled indeed her ears with wax,  
 See her tax her spouse too blind,  
 Wont to rouse is Womankind.

<sup>1</sup> The Dean of Lismore's Book. See Appendix. Earl Gerald was Lord Justice of Ireland in 1367. He composed many Irish and some Norman poems. He was learned, liberal, and popular.

Show a stranger,—off she trips,  
 Wreathes her lips with smiles resigned,  
 Him beguiles with martyred air—  
 False as fair is Womankind.

Wedded wife from altar rail,  
 Pious-pale before the priest,  
 After feast shows bitter rind—  
 Best beware of Womankind.

Best beware of Womankind,  
 Meetly mind, this truth proclaim :  
 He who fails full soon shall find  
 Bondage blind and bitter shame.

### EIVLIN A RÚIN<sup>1</sup>

#### OLD FORM

BY CARROL O'DALY (14TH CENTURY)

FAIN would I ride with thee,  
                   Eivlin a rúin ;  
 Fain would I ride with thee,  
                   Eivlin a rúin !

<sup>1</sup> The story of this song anticipates and possibly suggested that of the "Young Lochinvar." The youthful poet-chief, O'Daly, had been plighted to Eivlin Kavanagh, of the princely house of Leinster, who loved him. In his absence, her parents forced another suitor on her. Carrol O'Daly, however, disguised as a harper, appeared at the feast and won her to fly with him. See Introduction. Handel highly admired the beauty of the air, to which the words of "Robin Adair" and "Erin, the Smile," have been set. In his "History of Irish Music," Mr. Grattan Flood gives an interesting account of this and many other Irish airs.

Fain would I ride with thee,  
 To Tirauli's tide with thee,  
 In hope to abide with thee,  
                   Eivlin a rúin !

I'd spend kine with thee,  
                   Eivlin a rúin !  
 Kine upon kine with thee,  
                   Eivlin a rúin !

I'd walk the world so wide,  
 To win thee for my bride,  
 Never to leave thy side,  
                   Eivlin a rúin !

“Wilt thou come,—wilt thou stay ?  
                   Eivlin a rúin !

Wilt thou come,—wilt thou stay ?  
                   Earth's only boon !”

“I'll come, I will not stay !

I'll come, I will not stay !

I'll come, I will not stay !

                  But flee with thee soon !”

Céad mile fáilté, here !<sup>†</sup>  
                   Eivlin a rúin !

Céad mile fáilté, here !  
                   Eivlin a rúin !

A hundred thousand welcomes dear,  
 Nine hundred thousand welcomes here,  
 O welcomes for ever here !  
                   Eivlin a rúin !

<sup>†</sup> Pronounce Kade milla faultia, Iveleen a roo-in.



THE FAILING ART<sup>1</sup>

DONCAD MOR OF LENNOX

14TH—15TH CENTURY

GRIEVE for him whose voice is o'er  
 When called once more to meet with men ;  
 Him whose words come slow as sighs,  
 Who ever tries, and fails again.

Never now he swells the air,  
 Nor rolls the fair and faultless lay,—  
 Harp he cannot set aside,  
 Nor wake, when tried, its minstrelsy.

Yet his tinkling will not cease,  
 Nor bide in peace ; he still would sing—  
 When no man can tell his words  
 Nor hear the frail chords, faltering.

Grieve for him who fails in fame,  
 Nor keeps his name where none impeach ;

<sup>1</sup> The Dean of Lismore's Book. In this pathetic poem Doncad Mor anticipates, by four centuries, the plot of Balzac's novel, "Le Chef d'Œuvre," which Mr. Kipling recalls in "The Light that Failed." In all three cases, the interest centres on the failure of an artist's powers. Balzac and Kipling depict a painter with decaying faculties : but the painter is not aware of the ruin of his work. Doncad's minstrel must be supposed conscious of his wrecked powers, and his despairing efforts against inevitable fate make this a greater tragedy. It is one Balzac should have dealt with.

Him who strives, and still in vain,  
That fruit to gain he cannot reach.

Did I yearn such fruit to gain  
I should not strain without reprove ;  
I would tear the tree from clay  
Let whoso pray, or rage, or grieve.

### LOVE UNTOLD<sup>1</sup>

ISABEL STUART, FIRST COUNTESS OF ARGYLL, A.D. 1459

WOE to one whose wound is love,  
Be the reason what may be ;  
Who can heart from heart remove ?  
Sad the fate that follows me.

Love I gave my Love unknown,  
Never tongue the tale may speak ;  
Soon, unhealed, it shall be shown  
In fading face and thinning cheek.

He, to whom I gave my love  
(Ear shall hear not, none shall know),  
He has bonds eternal wove  
For me,—an hundred fold of woe.

<sup>1</sup> Dean of Lismore's Book. Isabel, second daughter of Stuart, Lord of Lorn, married Archibald, first Earl of Argyll (title granted A.D. 1457). The verses indicate a hidden romance.

A KING'S LESSON<sup>1</sup>

TADG O'BRUADIN, A.D. 1580

GREAT the teaching of a King,  
 He prosperity may bring,  
 May the land with order grace,  
 Raise his country or abase.

\* \* \* \* \*

Know whose pow'r is o'er thy head,  
 Follow Him, with faithful tread ;  
 In thy heart still let Him be  
 From whom *thou* hast royalty.

Mind thou this, o'er everything :  
 Love and honour the High King ;  
 Faithful fear of God gave force  
 To all wisdom, and its source.

Run not on a wanton will,  
 Chief of Thomond, heedful still :  
 Be the people's cause thy care—  
 Not an idler's task is there !

<sup>1</sup> This is part of a poem addressed by the bard to Doncad O'Brien (fourth Earl of Thomond) when the latter was elected Chieftain of his clan. The bold freedom of the bardic lesson contrasts with the adulation of the contemporary court-poets of England, as with the doctrine of James I. The modernity of the Irish bard's teaching is due to its antiquity ; mankind has moved round on its tracks. The syllabic measure of the original is given, but not certain peculiarities which would make a faithful translation impossible. It is related that the bard was ultimately murdered by a Cromwellian soldier, who coveted his inheritance.

Let no banquet, drink, or game,  
Maids, nor music thee inflame ;  
Make the ill-deed manifest  
Spite of potent chief's protest.

Not for love, nor fear, nor hate,  
Give thou, Judge deliberate,  
Wrongful sentence ; calmly cold,  
Silver sways it not, nor gold.

Then crowds shall come to sue thee,  
Bring all their quarrels to thee ;  
Nor from thee fear any wrong,  
Full of wisdom, skilled and strong.

Let thy fort be full of men,  
Few should of thy secrets ken ;  
Many courtiers gleam and flit  
Who for secrets are unfit.

Let thy rule not swerve away  
From one noble 'neath thy sway :  
This is Erinn's right and root,  
This her first law absolute.

Should thy friends impose, be thou,  
Till they're humble, stern of brow :  
Should for peace thy foemen sue  
Feuds forget in friendship true.

Fierce shall be thy countenance  
When thy hosts to war advance ;

Bright at banquet, when thou'lt share  
To each guest due honour there.

Haughty be with men of blood,  
Mild with learning's lettered brood;  
Be thy young face grave, thy speech  
Kind and courteous still to each.

High in deed, be low in pride,  
Staunch in rush of terror's tide ;  
Manful keep thy soul, my son,  
Till the battle's lost or won.

Claim thy homage, none omit,  
Place in power no man unfit ;  
When loose men in office stand,  
King, contempt will stir the land.

Never threaten, in thy wrath,  
War if no true cause it hath :  
Nor abandon right for peace,  
Or thou'lt dwindle and decrease.

Curb thy will, nor come perforce ;  
Bear at times to thwart its course :  
That the land draw to thy will  
Patience show in anger still.

Surest word the word that's slow.—  
Lower the lofty, lift the low,  
Quell the mob, make peace to sing—  
Such the true signs of a king !

Son, for thee no song I raise,  
 Though thou be designed for praise ;  
 I for thee stand silent still  
 Till our teaching thou fulfil.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then the sun of day, the sky,  
 Earth and water, birds on high,  
 Every element shall sing  
 To the praises of the king !

On the boughs shall swarm the bees,  
 Salmon leap from shining seas,  
 All the fair tribes of the flood  
 Praise with me the chieftain good.

Then the warriors, and the bard,  
 Then the king shall praise award,  
 They shall laud thy high estate,  
 Nor deem any king so great !

## FAREWELL TO INNISFAIL

GERALD NUGENT <sup>1</sup>

Woe, to part from Innisfail,  
 Woe from Erin's side to sail ;  
 Land of the bee-glad mountains !  
 Isle of the steeds and fountains !

<sup>1</sup> A bard of a noble Anglo-Norman family (de Nogent) who became Irish, and victims to later invaders. It is noticeable how appeal is made to old Gaelic heroes, whose feelings they assumed as part of their heritage. The Irish Nugents became

Now I cleave the foreign foam  
 Facing east from Fintan's home :  
 My heart leaves me, faring o'er,  
 Dear no shore but Erin's shore.

Shore of fine fruit-bended trees,  
 Shore of green grass-covered leas ;  
 Old plain of Ir, soft, show'ry,  
 Wheatful, fruitful, fair, flow'ry !

Home of priest and gallant knight,  
 Isle of gold-haired maidens bright,

illustrious leaders on the continent. Field-Marshal Nugent, of the Austrian service, defeated Murat. The poet's praise of the valour of Irishmen was supported by his contemporary, Edmund Spenser, who said "no man cometh on more bravely at a charge." The Irish cavalier, finely appalled, resembled Sir Topas "in his robe of sheklaton, which is that kind of gilded leather with which they used to embroyder their Irish jackets. And there, likewise, by that description, you may see the very fashion and manner of the Irish horseman most truly set forth in his long hose, his ryding showes of costly cordwaine, his hocqueton, and his haberion, and all the rest." . . . Sir Topas, in Chaucer, wore fine "cloth of lake," "sherte," and "breche" next his white skin :

"And next his sherte an haketon  
 And over them an habergeon,  
 For piercing of his herte.

"And over them a fin hauberk  
 Was all ywrought of Jewes werk,  
 Ful strong it was of plate ;  
 And over that his cote armoure,  
 As white as is the lily floure,  
 In which he would debate."

Banba of the clear blue wave,  
Of bold hearts and heroes brave.

If God bless my flag, unfurled,  
I'll yet reach my native world ;  
But I come not from abroad  
'Neath the shunnèd Saxons' rod.

Not deeps I dread, upheaving,  
But leaving Laeré's mountains ;  
'Tis quitting Delvin grieving,  
That fills all sorrow's fountains.

Fare ye well, who watch my sail  
Youths of honoured Innisfail !  
Farewell Meath, the nest of song,  
Noble, knightly, steadfast, strong !



## X.—SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

### DIRGE OF OLIVER GRACE

SEÁN MAC WALTER WALSH (1604)<sup>1</sup>

DARK the cloud our mountains o'er,  
A cloud that never came before ;  
Stern the noon-hush, broken lowly  
By the Voice of Sorrow solely.

Floats the death knell on the wind,  
Grief, alas ! comes close behind ;  
Harshly hoarse the raven's croaking,  
Warning that man's life is broken.

For thee, O noble youth ! for thee  
Wails the banshee mournfullie ;  
In the midnight, still and lone,  
Sadly swells her Caeiné's moan.

<sup>1</sup> This very Gaelic dirge was composed by the descendant of a Welshman for the descendant of an Anglo-Norman (of Raymond Le Gros, or Le Gras, whence Grace), and is rendered into English by the descendant of a Norseman. Here is evidence of how complex may be the Irish nature and the "Celtic note" at times.

The Rock's Son <sup>1</sup> answers to her wail,  
 Grieving from gray rock and vale ;  
 The cock no longer hails the pearly  
 Morn, nor cheers us late or early.

Ah, my Oliver óg, mo chree ! <sup>2</sup>  
 'Tis thy death wakes the weird banshee ;  
 'Tis it that brings—both night and morrow—  
 'Tis it that brings the bitter sorrow !

What fills thy place to us, our chief ?  
 Naught but Tears and sobbing Grief !  
 There's naught for us since he is taken  
 But weeping tears and sore heart-breaking.

Death ! thou'st smote for ever, now,  
 Fairest flower from highest bough ;  
 Mo nuar ! could nothing stay thy doom,  
 And save our dear one from the tomb ?

Sword of brightness, strong and sure,  
 Shield of justice and the poor,  
 'Neath thy noble father's banner  
 High thou'st won, in Ormond, honour.

Ne'er till came this darkest day  
 Thy home in sorrow hopeless lay ;  
 Good thou wast, O heir ! and noble,—  
 Thee they mourn in bitter trouble.

Rightful heir, in truth, still bearing  
 High their name and love for Erin,

<sup>1</sup> Echo.

<sup>2</sup> Young Oliver, my heart.

An oak-tree, thou wast fair to see,  
And like to spread thy branches free.

Such was not thy fate's designing,  
Low in earth thou'rt now reclining,  
Ruin of joy, each day for all—  
For thy love a black heart-pall !

She, a mother, ever weepeth  
For the long, lone sleep he sleepeth,—  
Her children's sire, her first love, dearest,  
Ah, 'tis she has anguish drearest.

Never again the chase he'll follow ;  
O'er misty mount or dewy hollow ;  
Never be heard his clear horn ringing,  
Never his dog's cry, gaily springing.

Never he'll urge his swift young steed  
Over the mount and over the mead ;  
Change is o'er his beauty bowed,  
O'er his glory falls a cloud.

O gen'rous hand, thou'rt weak for aye !  
Magnanimous heart, thou art but clay !  
Seed of knighthood, friend of the bard,  
O'er thee the Spirit of Song keeps ward.

Bright beam of song ! not quencht thy fame,  
My lay shall live with thy radiant name,  
And win a tear, in the after morrows,  
For thee, perchance, and thy bard of sorrows.

THE FLIGHT OF THE EARLS<sup>1</sup>

ANDREAS MAC MARCUIS, A.D. 1607

Lo, our land this night is lone !  
 Hear ye not sad Erinn's moan ?  
 Maidens weep and true men sorrow,  
 Lone the Brave Race night and morrow.

Lone this night is Fola's plain,—  
 Though the foemen swarm amain—  
 Far from Erinn, generous-hearted,  
 Far her Flower of Sons is parted.

They have crossed the Spanish foam,  
 To their great Forefather's home ;  
 Though from populous Erinn gone,  
 They have left behind not one.

Great the hardship ! great the grief !  
 Ulster wails Tirconaill's Chief,  
 From Emain west to Assarue  
 Wails gallant, gentle, generous Hugh.

<sup>1</sup> O'Neill and O'Donnell, Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell. The great plunder obtained, by the confiscation of the Earl of Desmond's estates in South Munster, in Elizabeth's reign, sharpened the appetite for more spoils. Hence in the reign of James I. a conspiracy was formed and a sham plot was alleged against the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell: they fled, and the lands they had ruled were shared among the spoilers. In the next reign an attempt was made to annul the titles of the old Anglo-Norman nobility of Connaught, for the new-comers spared no race.

Children's joy no more rejoices,—  
Fetters silence Song's sweet voices—  
Change upon our chiefs, alas !  
Bare the altar, banned the Mass.

Homes are hearthless, harps in fetters,  
Guerdons none for men of letters,  
Banquets none, nor merry meetings,  
Hills ring not the chase's geetings.

Songs of war make no heart stronger,  
Songs of peace inspire no longer,—  
In great halls, at close of days,  
Sound no more our Fathers' lays.

Bregia's plain now hears no more  
Great Milesian deeds of yore ;  
Unsung the rout, o'er hill and hollow  
When foemen flee and gay Gael follow !

Thus is Erinn's sad estate,  
This henceforth must be her fate ;  
Long the ban will lie upon her,—  
Helpless long in hard dishonour.

Now come,—it must, alas ! be said—  
Egyptian rule upon her head ;  
The faithless host round Troja's walls,  
The fate of Babylonian halls.

Foemen camp in Neimid's plains ;  
 Who shall break our heavy chains ?  
 What Naisi, son of Conn, shall prove  
 A Moses to the land we love ?

She has none who now can aid her,  
 All have gone before the invader ;  
 Banba's bonds and cruel cross  
 Steal the very soul from us !

## TWO CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM<sup>1</sup>

DONNCAD O'FUTAIL, A.D. 1619

O'ER the fair sea they set sail,  
 Two tried chiefs from Innis Gael,<sup>2</sup>  
 Free of will they left the shore—  
 We shall see them never more.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a long poem in "Miscellany of the Celtic Society." Concoabar was the son and heir of Sir Fingein O h-Edirsceóil,—which name was altered to Florence O'Driscoll. This chief had done homage to the Lord Deputy, but the son took service and rose to distinction abroad, like so many other Irishmen. His son's first name seems to have been curiously Latinized Cornelius, hence Corneil. The two champions of Christendom against the Turks were father and son : the latter, O'Donovan says, was killed at the mouth of the Mediterranean, in June, 1619, in a battle between the Turkish and Spanish Fleets. An Irishman was physician to Sobieski.

<sup>2</sup> Isle of the Gael.

Why did our comrades leave us,  
 That wistful woe should grieve us ?  
 Each went, with hero's ardour,  
 To serve as Europe's warder !

Forth they fared across the foam  
 For the fame of Christendom ;  
 They in high emprise succeed  
 By true worth and dauntless deed.

Their names shine clear in story,  
 Shore and sea speak their glory :  
 Nothing dimmed their valour's glow  
 Till an ill fate laid them low.

Conall Cearnach,<sup>1</sup> no, nor Cu<sup>2</sup>  
 Greater courage never knew ;  
 Nor fair Oscar, first in war,  
 Braver was than Concobar.

Oliver<sup>3</sup> hath noble name,  
 Fortibras is fair of fame ;  
 Yet, 'mid surge and spray of spears,  
 These our princes were their peers.

Conall Gulban,<sup>4</sup> great of yore,  
 Waged the war from shore to shore—  
 Though he urged the forays far,  
 Farther still came Concobar.

<sup>1</sup> Greatest of the Red Branch Knights, in the first century.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, Cuchulainn.

<sup>3</sup> One of Charlemagne's paladins, and frequently mentioned in Irish romance.

<sup>4</sup> Famous son of King Niall of the Nine Hostages.

Nor doth very Hector, he—  
 Nor Achilles, in degree,  
 Though aloft each shone a star,  
 Beat the blade from Conco-bar.

They have sent, hand over hand,  
 The renown through ev'ry land  
 Of their high heroic deeds,  
 Faring far where honour leads.

Well the Saxons know the name—  
 Well the Franks the flying fame  
 Of the bare-armed heroes' might,<sup>1</sup>  
 Of their far-resounding fight.

Nobles speak their praise in Spain,  
 And the Emp'ror in Almaine,  
 Fair the feats on honour's roll,  
 Of the heir of Edirskeól.

The champion chiefs of Flanders  
 Lament the dead Commanders,  
 Alba, Erinn, both deplore  
 The brave men who come no more.

But th' exulting Turks take breath,  
 They have rest with Corneil's death ;  
 They fear not now his warning,—  
 He sleepeth sound till Morning.

\* \* \* \* \*

How dark the clouds of heaven,  
 By flash of red fires riven,

<sup>1</sup> They bared the arm for battle, disdaining the encumbrance of armour.



No boughs bend <sup>1</sup> above the dell  
 Since the two famed heroes fell.

The shores and sea are wailing,  
 The moon and stars are paling,  
 And loud the cascade's calling,—  
 Because the knights have fallen.

The earth and air, all over,  
 The angel birds <sup>2</sup> that hover,  
 Each mournful night and morrow  
 Lament with lovers' sorrow.

There's no country, clan, nor home,  
 There's no heart in Christendom,  
 But shall feel as fell two stars  
 In the fate-killed Concobars.

## LAY THINE ARMS ASIDE, YOUNG MAID

BY PIERS FERRITER,<sup>3</sup> D. 1653

LAY thine arms aside, Young maid,  
 If thou wouldst not slay us all ;  
 If aside they be not laid  
 To the Court for aid I call.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, with fruit.

<sup>2</sup> Literal.

<sup>3</sup> Piers Ferriter, a true cultured poet of Norman descent, was, it is stated, the last of the Catholic Cavaliers who held out against Cromwell. He is described as a gallant soldier, clement to the conquered, and generous; he was, however, in breach of safe-conduct, executed at Killarney, in 1653, after the fall of Ross Castle. Crofton Croker quotes a vigorous version of his Lament for Maurice Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry, who died in Flanders, in 1646.—See Danta Piarais Feiriteir, &c., *leis an Athair Padraig ua Duinnin*, 1903.

Wilt thou put away thine arms ?  
Then thy curling hair conceal,  
Nor to mortal man the charms  
Of thy shoulder's snow reveal.

Dost thou think, O Maid demure,  
These need take no lover's life ?  
Glances from thine eyes be sure  
Pierce more deep than pointed knife.

True, thy ankles are but slight,  
Softly too thy white hands yield,  
But there never yet was Knight  
Half so armed with spear and shield !

Hide from me thy cheek of rose,  
Be thy lily neck unseen,  
Nor, for heaven's sake, disclose  
One curve of thy bosom's sheen.

Hide me in thine eye's eclipse,  
Of my death's decreed, Fair girl ;  
For thy soul's sake, close thy lips  
O'er those twinkling teeth of pearl.

If thou wilt not have us die,  
But with slaves art satisfied,  
Then, All-conquering girl ! we cry  
These, thy arms now lay aside.

LAMENT FOR EOGHAN RUA O'NEILL<sup>1</sup>

A.D. 1649

How great the loss is thy loss to me !  
 A loss to all who had speech with thee :—  
 On earth can so hard a heart there be  
 As not to weep for the death of Eoghan ?  
     Och, ochón ! 'tis I am stricken,  
     Unto death the isle may sicken,  
     Thine the Soul which all did quicken ;  
 —And Thou 'neath the sod !

I stood at Cavan o'er thy tomb,  
 Thou spok'st no word through all my gloom ;  
 O want ! O ruin ! O bitter doom !  
 O great, lost Heir of the House of Niall !  
     I care not now whom Death may borrow,  
     Despair sits by me, night and morrow.  
     My life henceforth is one long sorrow ;  
 —And Thou 'neath the sod !

O child of heroes, heroic child !  
 Thou'dst smite our foe in battle wild,  
 Thou'dst right all wrong, O just and mild !  
 And who lives now—since dead is Eoghan ?

<sup>1</sup> There are at least three dirges for Eoghan Rua : one, of recent date, by Thomas Davis ; a Gaelic lament, translated by Mangan, somewhat formal in tone ; and this, which evidently expresses the sincere feelings of a personal friend, whose name is lost to us.

In place of feasts, alas ! there's crying,  
 In place of song, sad woe and sighing,  
 Alas, I live with my heart a-dying,  
 —And Thou 'neath the sod !

My woe, was ever so cruel woe ?  
 My heart is torn with rending throe !  
 I grieve that I am not lying low  
 In silent death by thy side, Eoghan !  
     Thou wast skilled all straits to ravel,  
     And thousands broughtst from death and cavi.  
     They journey safe who with thee travel,  
 —And Thou with thy God !

My days shall count but a short, sad space,  
 Till I, 'mid saints, shall behold thy face ;  
 Nor meet to mourn in that holy place,  
 In joy before the self-chosen Lamb.  
     O then I ne'er shall fear to sever,  
     O from thy side I'll wander never,  
     Singing the glory and peace for ever ;  
 —And we, with our God !

## SHAUN O'DWYER OF THE GLEN

*Air: "Sean O'Duibir an Gleanna" <sup>1</sup>*

A.D. 1651

OFT, at pleasant morning,  
 Sunshine all adorning,  
 I've heard the horn give warning  
     With bird's mellow call—  
 Badgers flee before us,  
 Woodcocks startle o'er us,  
 Guns make ringing chorus,  
     'Mid the echoes all ;  
 The fox run higher and higher,  
 Horsemen shouting nigher,  
 The maiden mourning by her  
     Fowl he left in gore.  
 Now, they fell the wild-wood :  
 Farewell, home of childhood,  
 Ah, Shaun O'Dwyer a' Glanna,—  
     Thy day is o'er !

It is my sorrow sorest,  
 Woe,—the falling forest !  
 The north wind gives me no rest,  
     And Death's in the sky :

<sup>1</sup> Pronounce : Shaun O Dyer a glanna. Colonel John O'Dwyer was a distinguished officer, who, in 1651, commanded in Tipperary and Waterford, and subsequently left Waterford for Spain with five hundred followers.

My faithful hound's tied tightly,  
 Never sporting brightly,  
 Who'd make a child laugh lightly,  
     With tears in his eye.

The antlered, noble-hearted  
 Stags are never started,  
 Never chased nor parted  
     From the furzy hills.

If peace came, but a small way,  
 I'd journey down on Galway,  
 And leave, tho' not for alway,  
     My Erinn of Ills.

The land of streamy valleys  
 Hath no head nor rallies—  
 In city, camp, or palace,  
     They never toast her name.

Alas, no warrior column,—  
 From Cloyne to peaks of Colum,  
 O'er wasted fields and solemn,

    The shy hares grow tame :  
 O ! when shall come the routing,  
 The flight of churls and flouting ?  
 We hear no joyous shouting  
     From the blackbird brave ;

More warlike is the omen,  
 Justice comes to no men,  
 Priests must flee the foemen  
     To the mountain cave.

It is my woe and ruin  
 That sinless death's undoing

Came not, ere the strewing  
Of all my bright hopes.  
How oft, at sunny morning,  
I've watched the Spring returning,  
The Autumn apples burning,  
And dew on woodland slopes !  
Now my lands are plunder,  
Far my friends asunder,  
I must hide me under  
Branch and bramble screen—  
If soon I cannot save me  
By flight from foes who crave me,  
O Death, at last I'll brave thee  
My bitter foes between !

## THE MUNSTER KNIGHT †

RICHARD O'BROIN

“HAIL, O fair maiden, this morning fair,  
Calm are thy slumbers—and I in despair ;  
Rise and make ready, and turning our steeds  
We'll travel together to Munster's meads.”

“Tell first thy Christian and clan-name too,  
Lest what said about Munstermen might come true :  
They'd take me in joy and they'd leave me in rue  
To bear my kin's scorn my whole life through.”

† This poem may date from Elizabethan days.

“I’ll tell first my Christian and clan-name true :—  
 Ristard O’Broin from o’er Munster’s dew,  
 I’m heir to an Earl and to tall towers white,  
 And for me dies the child of the Greenwood-Knight.”

“If thou’rt heir to an Earl and to tall towers white,  
 Thou’lt have choice of rich damsels to be thy delight,  
 Who’ve peers as their fathers and hold the high cheer,  
 Thou need’st my humble self not, Cavalier !”

“Come with me and thou, too, shalt sit with peers,  
 Come with me and thou, too, shalt hold high cheers ;  
 Thou’lt have halls where are dances and music old,  
 Thou’lt have couches the third of each red with gold !”

“I’m not used at my father’s to sit with hosts,  
 I’m not used at the board to have wines and toasts,  
 I’m not used to the dance-halls, with music old,  
 Nor to couches the third of each red with gold.”

“O would we were speeding in chariot fine,  
 A glitter of gold in the gay sunshine,  
 More welcome than sunlight thy gold tresses are,  
 And long I have pined for my Morning Star.”

### THE FLOWER OF MAIDENS BROWN

To the county of Leitrim—if you would come over !  
     O Flower of Maidens Brown !  
 I’d bring you sweet meud † and honey of the clover,  
     O Flower of Maidens Brown !

† Metheglin.



Beneath the green boughs, along the sunny shore,  
 You'd see the ships sail and watch the dipping oar,  
 And sadness or grief you never should know more,  
 O Flower of Maidens Brown !

“ I will not flee with you, in vain your imploring,”  
 Saith Flower of Maidens Brown.

“ A banquet of praises would leave me deploring,”  
 Saith Flower of Maidens Brown !

“ A thousand times better live without a love,  
 Than walking the dew, in valley or in grove,  
 The pulse of my heart for you did never move,”  
 Saith Flower of Maidens Brown !

I saw her—she came across the mountain heather,  
 As a star through mist shines down,  
 I told her my love, and we roved on together,  
 Till the green milking field we found ;  
 Then, seated awhile, where blossomed boughs grew,  
 I plighted my pledge that she should never rue,  
 All dangers I'd bear and ever would prove true  
 To Flower of Maidens Brown !

'Tis my grief, 'tis my ruin—she will not come hither,  
 The Flower of Maidens Brown !

The spouse of my heart to be, for aye together  
 With Flower of Maidens Brown !

From mankind afar, in a glen out of sight,  
 All happy, all joyful, by day and by night,—  
 O God ! what a fate if I win not my delight,  
 The Flower of Maidens Brown !

## EIVLIN A RÚIN

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*Air*: "Eiblin a Rúin"<sup>1</sup>

I AM dazzled with love for thee,  
 Eivlin a rúin !  
 To praise you is joy to me,  
 Eivlin a rúin !  
 My Glory of Light art thou !  
 My Solace most bright art thou !  
 My Mirth and my Might art thou !  
 Eivlin a rúin !

O, Fosterer sure art thou !  
 O, Wood-dove all pure art thou !  
 My heart's only Cure art thou !  
 Eivlin a rúin !

With frankness and spotless youth,  
 Eivlin a rúin !  
 Could you deceive my truth ?  
 Eivlin a rúin !  
 More beauteous than Venus far,  
 More fair than the Morning Star,  
 My Helen, unstained, you are  
 Eivlin a rúin !

<sup>1</sup> "Eiblin a rúin." Pronounced Eivleen or Eileen a rooin  
 —i.e., Eivleen, O secret treasure.

My red Rose, my Lily white,  
My treasure for ever bright,  
Darling ! my soul's delight !  
Eivlin a rúin !

I'd cross the salt sea with you,  
Eivlin a rúin !  
And ne'er—ne'er I'd flee from you,  
Eivlin a rúin !  
What soft tales I'd tell to you,  
I'd taste your lips' sweetness, too,  
I'd sing 'mid the falling dew,  
“ Eivlin a rúin ! ”

I'd bring you where rivers glide,  
Where green boughs o'ershade the tide,  
'Neath music of birds to bide,  
Eivlin a rúin !

O ! joy beyond life would bless,—  
Eivlin a rúin !  
Should I wed your loveliness,  
Eivlin a rúin !  
My fond arm would circle you,  
My heart be your guardian true,  
Ne'er maiden were loved like you,  
Eivlin a rúin !

My beauteous Star, mild and clear,  
Sooner than cause a tear,  
O Death,—it were welcome here !  
Evelin a rúin !

## THE FAIRY LAND OF PROMISE

ART MAC CUMAIGH <sup>1</sup>

ON the clay of Creggan churchyard, I slept all the night  
 in woe,  
 With the rise of morn, a Maiden came and kissed me,  
 bending low :  
 Her cheek had the blush of beauty, her tresses the  
 golden sheen,  
 'Twas the world's delight to gaze on the face of that fair  
 young Queen !

“O true heart,” she said, “and constant ! Consume  
 not in grief for aye,  
 But arise and make ready swiftly, and come to the West  
 away :  
 In that fair land of Promise, strangers bear sway o'er no  
 sea nor shore,  
 But the sweetness of airy music shall entrance thee for  
 evermore.”

“Not for all of the gold that monarchs could heap on  
 the round of earth  
 Would I stay when you seek me, Princess !—but this  
 lone Land of my birth

<sup>1</sup> This pathetic ballad was composed by an Ulster bard, after the last struggles of the independent Irish. All night he had lain amongst the graves of his chieftains, and is comforted by an ethereal Spirit which allures from hopeless grief to an Ideal World. The Spirit of Poetry has thus often comforted the Gael. Another version is given in Mr. McCall's "Noinins" (Dublin : Seeley, Bryers and Walker) with some true Irish songs.

Keeps yet on its hills some kindred my heart would be  
loath to leave,  
And the bride that in youth I wedded, were I gone,  
would, it may be, grieve.”

“Methinks that, of all thy kindred, no friend hast thou  
living now,—  
None speaks but to deride thee, none grieves for thy  
stricken brow ;  
No hand goes to clasp a comrade’s, no eyes to look into  
thine—  
Why tarry in snows of sorrow, when I call to a life  
divine ?”

“Ah, my anguish, my wound ! we’ve lost them the Gael  
of our true Tyrone,  
And the Heir of the Fews, unhonoured, sleeps under the  
cold gray stone ;  
Brave branches of Niall Frasach, whose delight were the  
lays of old,  
Whose hearts gave the minstrels welcome, whose hands  
gave the poets gold !”

“Since at Aughrim all were vanquished, and the Boyne  
—alas, my woe !  
And fallen the great Milesians, and every chieftain  
low,—  
Were’t not better to fairy fortress to flee, in our love,  
away,  
Than to suffer Clan William’s <sup>1</sup> arrows in thy torn heart  
ev’ry day ?

<sup>1</sup> The partisans of William III.

“One pledge I shall ask you only, one promise, O  
 Queen divine!  
 And then I will follow faithful,—still follow each step of  
 thine,—  
 Should I die, in some far-off country, in our wanderings  
 east and west,  
 In the fragrant clay of Creggan, let my weary heart  
 have rest.”

## MABEL NI KELLY †

TORALACH O'CAROLAN (1670-1738)

WHOMEVER Fate may favour  
 To have his right hand 'neath thy head,  
 For all his life, he never  
 Will think of death or danger dread.

† The genius of O'Carolan infused fresh and vigorous life into Irish Song. Three versions of this lyric have been published, but none in the metre of the original. Hardiman, who considered it one of the bard's finest pieces, supplies the reason: “The difficulty of adapting English verse, in any variation of metre, to the complicated modulations of several of his surviving melodies is generally acknowledged. . . . His lively style, so different from the slow, plaintive strains of our ancient music, the rapidity of his turns, his abrupt changes and terminations, so unexpected yet so pleasing, could be followed only in the language in which he thought, composed, and sung.”

In this version, the original metre of O'Carolan's irregular lyric is reproduced, in English, with its complicated modulations.

O head of the beauteous curling hair !  
 O breast like the swimming swan so fair !  
     Love and hope of Lover,  
     All the island over,  
 Fairest maid is Mabel, here and everywhere !

    No song the sweetest,  
     No music meetest,  
 But she sings its melody, full, soft, and true ;  
     Her cheek the rose a-blowing,  
     With comrade lily glowing,  
 Her glancing eyes, like opening blossoms blue.  
     And a bard has sung how herons keen  
 On hearing her victor-voice slumber serene.  
     Her eyes of splendour  
     Are wells of candour.—  
 Here's thy health, go leór, a stór, our beauty bright  
 queen !

    Since they have passed death's portals  
     Those heroines of world-wide name,  
     Methinks, their place 'mid mortals  
 Is Mabel's now by right and fame.  
 Lively and lovely all hearts she has won,  
 Fortune of Song and its sweet paragon,  
     Curling Cooleen fairest,  
     Down-white shoulder rarest,  
 Chord of music ringing, after she has gone !

    None can espy her,  
     Such charm is nigh her,

But will startle, and will flutter, like wings in the air—  
    And the lamp will lose its light  
    Before the maiden bright,  
Of all the Gaelic nation most winsome and most fair :  
For foot or hand or eye or mouth, nothing can compare !  
Her tresses, like a sunbeam, to the grasses fall,  
    Then let the palm be mine  
    Of minstrelsy divine,—  
Because I sing the Sovereign of all !



XI.—EIGHTEENTH CENTURY :  
PATRIOTIC

THE FAIR HILLS OF EIRÉ

BY DONCAD MAC CONMARA. CIRCA 1736<sup>1</sup>

*Air* : "Uileacan Dub O"

TAKE my heart's blessing over to dear Eiré's strand—  
Fair Hills of Eiré O !

To the Remnant that love her—our Forefathers' Land,  
Fair Hills of Eiré O !

How sweet sing the birds, o'er mount there and vale,  
Like soft sounding chords, that lament for the Gael,—  
And I o'er the surge, far, far away must wail  
The Fair Hills of Eiré O !

<sup>1</sup> Composed whilst the poet was in exile, on the Continent (at Hamburg), during the Penal Régime. The name Eiré (Ireland) is dissyllabic and may be pronounced as "eyrie." The bard was born at Cratloe, Clare County, about 1710, and outlived the century. In spite of the penal laws against education, he succeeded in acquiring, at home and on the Continent, a mastery of classic and foreign languages. Besides short poems, he wrote a mock-heroic Æneid, detailing his adventures. In his old age he became blind, and the Irish teachers and pupils in Waterford, with old-time liberality and appreciativeness, laid a tribute on themselves for his maintenance.

How fair are the flow'rs on the dear daring peaks,  
     Fair Hills of Eiré O !  
 Far o'er foreign bowers I love her barest reeks,  
     Fair Hills of Eiré O !  
 Triumphant her trees, that rise on ev'ry height,  
 Bloom-kissed, the breeze comes odorous and bright,  
 The love of my heart !—O my very soul's delight !  
     The Fair Hills of Eiré O !

Still numerous and noble her sons who survive,  
     Fair Hills of Eiré O !  
 The true hearts in trouble,—the strong hands to strive—  
     Fair Hills of Eiré O !  
 Ah, 'tis this makes my grief, my wounding and my woe  
 To think that each chief is now a vassal low,  
 And my Country divided amongst the Foreign Foe—  
     The Fair Hills of Eiré O !

In purple they gleam, like our High Kings of yore,  
     The Fair Hills of Eiré O !  
 With honey and cream are her plains flowing o'er,  
     Fair Hills of Eiré O !  
 Once more I will come, or very life shall fail,  
 To the heart-haunted home of the ever-faithful Gael,  
 Than king's boon more welcome the swift swelling  
 sail—  
     For the Fair Hills of Eiré O !

The dew-drops sparkle, like diamonds on the corn,  
     Fair Hills of Eiré O !  
 Where green boughs darkle the bright apples burn,  
     Fair Hills of Eiré O !

Behold, in the valley, cress and berries bland,  
 Where streams love to dally, in that Wondrous Land,  
 While the great River-voices roll their music grand  
     Round the Fair Hills of Eiré O !

O, 'tis welcoming, wide-hearted, that dear Land of Love !  
     Fair Hills of Eiré O !

New life unto the martyred is the pure breeze above  
     The Fair Hills of Eiré O !

More sweet than tune flowing o'er the chords of gold  
 Comes the kine's soft lowing, from the mountain fold,—  
 O, the Splendour of the Sunshine on them all,—Young  
     and Old,

'Mid the Fair Hills of Eiré O !

## THE BRIGHTNESS OF BRIGHTNESS

EGAN O'REILLY<sup>1</sup>.

BRIGHTNESS of Brightness came, in loneliness, advancing,  
 Crystal of Crystal her clear gray eyes were glancing,  
 Sweetness of Sweetness her soft words flowed, en-  
     trancing,  
 Redness and Whiteness her cheek's fair form enhancing.

<sup>1</sup> John Mor O'Reilly, the son of a gentleman farmer, was sent from Crosserlough, Cavan, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, to learn classics in Kerry, where the Penal Code did not operate efficiently, and communication with the Continent was frequent. Having, in self-defence, slain one of several men who waylaid him, he was tried and acquitted at law; but, by the Church canons, he was forbidden admission to its ministry. He settled in Kerry, married a Miss Egan: their son Egan O'Reilly (often made O'Rahilly in Munster) was the bard.

Cluster of Clusters, her hair descended flowing,  
 Swept o'er the flowers in showers of golden glowing ;  
 Round her a raiment more pure than purest snowing,  
 Lofty her radiant race far beyond our knowing.

Lore of all Lores, she there swift to me imparted,  
 Lore of his sailing, from whom we long were parted ;  
 Lore of their wailing, who to wreak his ruin started,  
 Lore not for song, but a trust for the true-hearted !

Thrills after thrills came as I drew nigh this Wonder,  
 Captor she captured, and bound my senses under ;  
 When for His aid I cried, who ruleth thought and  
                   thunder,  
 Flashing she fled to the Peaks of Luachra, yonder.

Throbbing I follow, o'er hollow, height, and river,  
 Through many unknown ways, where lone waters  
                   shiver,  
 Oped the Druid Fort, a passage free to give her,  
 Where, in its core of cores, me she did deliver.

Laughter, thereafter, broke forth in harsh derision,  
 Wizardry, Witchery, kept watch in sour suspicion,  
 Chaining they chained me, then showed her sad position,  
 Bound to a Clown,—the Maid of Maids elysian !

Forth rushed my words of wrath and indignation :  
 “ Thine not to brook such base humiliation,  
 When the noblest knight of all the Scotie nation  
 Thrice sought to raise Thee to right royal station.”

Hearing my voice she wept, noble sorrow showing,  
 Tears fell in silence, like bitter torrents flowing ;  
 Guerdon she gave, as my guide through gloom, bestowing  
 Brightness of Brightness I'd seen, in loneliness, when  
 going.<sup>1</sup>

## THE DAWN OF DAY

EGAN O'REILLY <sup>2</sup>

THE Fair Maid Morning moved o'er the ocean,  
 The flow'rs grew fragrant on ev'ry bough ;  
 Sweet rose the voices of birds in motion,  
 And joy in all breathed around me now :—  
 Slow sound of waves, where the swans were gliding,  
 Soft call of cuckoos in greenwood gay,  
 Smooth shimm'ring gleams from the billows sliding,  
 And the heavens smiling the Dawn of Day !

<sup>1</sup> The argument, of course, is that the bard, in solitude, met the Spirit of Song, which led him over all obstacles to his Queenly Erinn, fettered and degraded : then Erinn, in guerdon for his loyalty, bestowed on him the Spirit of Poetry, whose light and sweetness gave him purer vision and consolation.

<sup>2</sup> O'Kearney MSS., Royal Irish Academy. O'Kearney states that, every seventh year, the fishermen off the Black Rocks, near Dundalk, may see the splendid vision of an ancient city, with a fair space of fruitful lands around it. It is noteworthy that the dawning (not the midnight) hour was the propitious time for fairy appearances. Tradition seems, in this and other visions, to have preserved the memory of the pagan paradise visited of old by Cuchulainn, and later by Bran and others. Clarence Mangan gave a free paraphrase of the original Irish in "The Dawning of Day," in a quite different metre, but full of melody.

The bees o'er meadows went seeking sweetness,  
 The splendid fish gleamed o'er ocean's brow,  
 The white lambs played in a happy fleetness,  
 And ripples ran from the rushing prow ;  
 When, lo ! there shone, on the surface sunny,  
 Our Hero-champions in war's array,  
 The dew that fell was of newest honey—  
 How gay and gladsome the Dawn of Day !

Floating Sea-nymphs were round them glancing,  
 The blowing breeze bade their banners hail—  
 Hosts on hosts of our friends advancing,  
 In gleaming arms, came to free the Gael.  
 Loud rang the trumps o'er ranks victorious  
 Of noble knights for the noble fray,  
 Our brave defence in the battle glorious—  
 Great God ! how radiant the Dawn of Day !

Through wondrous forests the hosts came marching,  
 Through glades that glowed with all berries sweet,  
 The very brambles that rose, o'er-arching,  
 Rained scented blossoms before their feet.  
 'Twas Paradise, methought, in glory,  
 With gate thrown wide to the Gael for aye !  
 I looked again—ah, the cruel story !  
 There was naught, my grief ! but the Dawn of Day !

## OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

SEAN CLARACH MAC DONNELL <sup>1</sup>

ONCE I was a maiden fair,  
 Now a widow's weeds I wear,  
 My true Love cleaves the billow's spray,  
 Over the hills and far away !

## CHORUS.

This were the choice of the world for me,  
 To sail with him the shining sea,  
 With him to be, at the dawn of day,  
 Over the hills and far away.

O, to hear my true Love come,  
 With pealing of bell and roll of drum,  
 While trumpets sound the gathering gay  
 Over the hills and far away !

*Chorus.*

O, to see my true Love bold,  
 And on his brow the crown of gold !

<sup>1</sup> Born in Cork County, 1691, the poet died in 1751. The historian O'Halloran writes: "Mr. Mac Donnell, a man of great erudition, a profound antiquarian and poet, whose death I sensibly feel, and from whom, when a boy, I learned the rudiments of our language, continually kept up this custom"—of holding Sessions of Bards. He was well versed in Greek and Latin, and proposed to translate Homer into Irish. Yet, it was the Penal time, and "on more occasions than one, he saved his life by hasty retreats from his enemies, the bard-hunters."—HARDIMAN.

His country's joy, his foe's dismay,  
Over the hills and far away !

*Chorus.*

Love of my heart, my prince, my king !  
Sweeter than song the wild birds sing,  
Brighter to me than star of day,  
Over the hills and far away !

*Chorus.*

I'll stand yon mountain peak above,  
And sing the praise of my own true Love,  
Till heaven itself shall help the fray,  
For the sake of him who is far away.

CHORUS.

This were the choice of the world for me,  
To sail with him the shining sea,  
With him to be, at the dawn of day,  
Over the hills and far away !

## THE SPIRIT OF SONG

PATRICK MAC GEAROIT (FITZGERALD), A.D. 1764

A DARK mist druidic closed o'er me  
As, wearied of woods and astray,  
I saw the weird lake gleam before me  
Of Blarney, and fain I would stay :  
The branches of blossoms drooped over  
When, sudden, She came to my side,



In beauty far fairer than lover  
Had ever, since Eden, espied !

My heart beat with rapture, and brightened  
My soul to that Sprite from above ;  
The smile from her blue eyes that lightened  
Sent my bosom a-thrilling with love.  
O berry-red cheeks ! and O cluster  
Of curling gold hair to the knee !  
I could gaze the whole night on your lustre  
And the night seem a minute to me !

“ The Brink of White Rocks <sup>1</sup> has it been a  
Retreat for thy beauty ? ” I said,  
“ Art thou Ainé, or Miorras, or Cliona,  
O gentle and snowy-palmed maid ?  
Art thou Deirdré, whose wonderful fairness  
Lured a Crimson Branch Knight o’er the sea ?  
Hast thou tidings of rue or of rareness  
From wand’rings to whisper to me ? ”

“ For the clans of high Miled I’m grieving,  
Of that flower of the brave is my race,  
And long I have mourned in Bán-eeving <sup>2</sup>  
To hear their gay cheer in the chase.

<sup>1</sup> Aeivil was the Fairy Queen of the North, Mab (Madb) was the Fairy Queen of Connaught, and Cliona (pronounced Cleena) of the South. The Wave of Cliona is off Cape Clear, but her chief residence, the headquarters of all the Munster fairies, was in a wild mountain region, near Mallow and the Cross of Donochmore.

<sup>2</sup> “ Bán aeibinn ”—the pleasant “ bawn ” or mead of Blarney, which belonged to McCarthy Mór.

But hark ! of the Viscount of Blarney  
 Soon the voice in yon turrets shall ring,  
 And our Exile be victor in war, nay !  
 Three islands shall crown him their king.

“ These tidings thy kinsmen to charm or  
 To frighten their foes bear away,  
 Our warriors in Spain don their armour,  
 And swift sailing barks fill the bay :  
 They'll wing to green Erinn, their way, tide  
 And tempest shall scatter the foe,  
 And Freedom shall gladden ere May-tide  
 The true-hearted Lordly and Low.

“ O Bard, skilled in musical cadence,  
 Come flee with me down to Tyrone,  
 Where an hundred of silken-bright maidens  
 In druid enchantment are thrown.  
 We'll have festivals, dancing, and gladness,  
 The harps shall their melodies pour,  
 The fairest shall love thee to madness,  
 And youth shall rejoice thee once more.

“ O Bridi,<sup>1</sup> of Fairies the fairest !  
 An thou give but a month and a day,  
 To prepare for the life thou preparest,  
 I'll haste to thy side and away.  
 The beloved of my youth I must give her  
 Farewell, and my blessing for aye ;  
 Then from thee, Spirit sweet, if I sever,  
 May I swiftly go down to the clay ! ”

<sup>1</sup> The Gaelic goddess of poetry.

## THE DEAR WHITE YOUTH

SEÁN O'COILEANN<sup>1</sup>*Air: "An Cádilín donn"*

THE golden gleaming of dawn shone streaming  
 O'er leafy oaks by the lonely shore,  
 Where to me came, in my visioned dreaming,  
 A Maid celestial the south sea o'er.  
 Her brow was brighter than stars that light our  
 Dim dewy earth ere the summer dawn;  
 But she sighed, deploring, "My heart of sorrow!  
 Ne'er brings a morrow, *Mo Buachaill Bán*.<sup>2</sup>

Her teeth were pearlets, her curling tresses  
 All golden flowed to the shining sea,  
 Soft hands and spray white, such brows as traces  
 The artist's pen with most grace, had she.  
 Lo, all the splendour of sunshine dancing  
 Thro' snowy lilies her cheeks upon!  
 But the royal light of her clear eyes' glancing  
 With tears was darkened for *Buachaill Bán!*

I lowly bowed to this Maid of glory,  
 The bright, the beauteous, the faultless flow'r!—

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes written O'Cullane, and (wrongly) Collins. The bard, one of the O'Coileanns, chiefs of Castlelyons, was born about the year 1754, in Cork County, and died in 1816. He composed several fine poems, e.g., a "Lament for Timoleague Abbey," translated by Sir Samuel Ferguson.

<sup>2</sup> *Buachaill Bán* (pronounced Bohill Bawn) means fair or white Youth.

And sought the lay of her sorrow's story,  
 The race that owned such a peerless dow'r.  
 " Art child of gods of the olden sky ? is't  
 An earthly King who thy love has won ?  
 O name this Highest, whose fate thou sighest,  
 For whom thou diest, thy *Buachaill Bán*.

" Art thou that Star of all maids for beauty,  
 Though clouded now in a night of grief,  
 Since false King Connor broke faith and duty  
 And Naisi slew—thy heroic chief ?  
 Or wailing Spirit who, on Moyle's water,  
 Lir's lovely daughter, wert once a swan,—  
 A Red Branch Knight who lies low in slaughter,  
 Was he thy darling, thy *Buachaill Bán* ?"

" O none of these," said the wondrous Maiden,  
 " I am Fola, Queen of the Gael !  
 With foreign fetters my clans are laden,  
 My chiefs are bondsmen in Innisfail !  
 In wasting woe I've been long a griever  
 For one—true heir to victorious Conn,  
 The exiled offspring of royal Eiver,  
 My love for ever, my *Buachaill Bán*."

" O, noble Lady ! weep now no longer,  
 Take comfort, heart, all so worn with grief !  
 He comes, thy champion, from exile stronger  
 With arms and armies to thy relief ;  
 Their hosts are nearing the shores of Erin,  
 In tall barks steering the seas upon,  
 Soon thou shall crown with thy hand victorious  
 Thy lover glorious, thy *Buachaill Bán* !"

Her sorrow fled, she struck the golden  
 High ringing harp with her snowy hand,  
 And poured in music the regal, olden,  
 The lofty lays of a free-made land.  
 The birds, the brooks, and the breeze seemed springing  
 From grief to gladness that sunny dawn,  
 And all the woods with delight were ringing—  
 So sweet her singing for *Buachaill Bán* !

## THE CRUISKEEN LAUN

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

O SONS of noble Erinn,  
 I've tidings of high daring  
 To brighten now your faces pale and wan :  
 Then hearken, gather nearer,  
 In Gaelic ringing clearer,  
 We'll pledge them in a cruiskeen lán, lán, lán,<sup>1</sup>  
 We'll pledge them in a cruiskeen lán !  
 Olfameed an cruiskeen,  
 Sláinté gal mo vuirneen !<sup>2</sup>  
 In motion, over ocean, slán, slán, slán !

<sup>1</sup> Crusga is a jar (compare the German *krug*, and French *cruche*), and cruigín, its diminutive, is a little jar : lán (pronounced laun) means full, and slán (pronounced slaun) safe.

<sup>2</sup> "Let us drink the cruiskeen—the bright health of my darling." This is the earliest Irish song which I have seen of this name : it must have suggested the popular song in English.

In exile dark and dreary,  
 Wandering far and weary,  
     With friends that never failed, I have gone,  
 The trusted and true-hearted,—  
 Would God, we'd never parted  
     Our brothers, boys, a cruiskeen lán, lán, lán !  
     Our heroes in a cruiskeen lán.

Heav'n speed them over ocean,  
 With breeze of rapid motion,  
     The ships that King Charles sails upon ;  
 With troops the frank and fearless,  
 To win our Freedom peerless,  
     Our Freedom, boys, a cruiskeen lán, lán, lán !  
     Our Freedom in a cruiskeen lán !

Young men who now are sharing  
 The toast we raise to Erinn,  
     With hope that the King is coming on,  
 Grasp your guns and lances  
 For swift his host advances,  
     We'll toast them in a cruiskeen lán, lán, lán !  
     We'll toast them in a cruiskeen lán !

The tribe who would destroy all  
 Our rightful princes royal  
     Shall hence end their rule and begone ;  
 The Gael shall live in gladness,  
 And banished be all sadness.  
 To that time, then, a cruiskeen lán, lán, lán !  
     That time, boys, a cruiskeen lán !  
     Olfameed an cruiskeen,  
     Sláinté gal mo vuirneen,  
 In motion, over ocean, slán, slán, slán

SHIELA GAL NI CONNOLAN<sup>1</sup>WILLIAM O'LEANAIN,<sup>2</sup> 1750*Air: "Móirin ni Chuillionain"*

ALONE, at dim dawn early,  
 I stood within the islet bowers,  
 Where Lawin's<sup>3</sup> stream flows pearly  
 'Mid wavy grass and fragrant flowers ;  
 Green earth gave fruits unchary,  
 And rosy wines, they over-ran  
 For me, from nymphs of faery  
 Like Shiela gal ni Connolan !

Fair flocks of birds sang sweetly  
 'Mid floods of flowers, their pleasant home,  
 And in the stream-isle meetly  
 I broke the golden honey-comb :  
 When lo ! on brink tree-shady,  
 A Child of Glory on me shone,  
 With features like our Lady—  
 Our Shiela gal ni Connolan !

In beauty white, this daughter  
 Of graceful majesty was drest,  
 Like swans above the water  
 The snowy radiance of her breast.

<sup>1</sup> Bright Shiela ni Connolan.<sup>2</sup> This name is now sometimes written Lenane, Lennon, and (wrongly) Leonard.<sup>3</sup> The Leaman = Smooth (*cf.* Leman, Leven), or Launc, flows into Killarney Lake.

On her cheek the crimson berry  
 Lay in the lily's bosom wan,  
 And forth my love did hurry  
 To Shiela gal ni Connolan !

Her teeth were small and pearl-like,  
 And white as brightness of the blooms ;  
 Her lustrous palms were fair like  
 Downy silk from finest looms ;  
 No gems or 'broidered glove or  
 Red gold her fingers glittered on,—  
 O, in meanest garb I'd love her  
 Fair Shiela gal ni Connolan !

Her rose-red lips beguiling  
 Spake words more than honey-sweet,  
 And o'er her glad eyes smiling  
 Were pencilled eyebrows arching meet,—  
 As if some artist loreful  
 Twin bows with compass fine had drawn.  
 I'd not leave for empires oreful  
 Sweet Shiela gal ni Connolan !

In truth, I'll lose all gladness  
 With wasting love for her, the Sprite  
 Who clings with yearning sadness  
 To Eiré's woods and valleys bright.  
 My arrowy piercing sorrow  
 Would vanish swiftly, blue-eyed one !  
 If far and free to-morrow  
 With Shiela gal ni Connolan !



Her clustering, loosened trees  
 Flowed glossily, enwreathed with pearls,  
 To veil her breast with kisses  
 And sunny rays of golden curls !  
 But grief has pierced my bosom—  
 My weary days lag 'neath a ban—  
 Thro' thy beauty, O white Blossom !  
 O Shiela gal ni Connolan.

When birds, 'mid branches twining,  
 Beheld her eyes, they thought them, sure,  
 Two rays of sun, or shining  
 Beams from the crystal pure ;  
 When rose her sweet voice ringing,  
 They strove to peer its mellow tone,  
 But were vanquished by the singing  
 Of Shiela gal ni Connolan !

While o'er the smooth stream glancing,  
 A moment ere her form I spied,  
 I saw her shadows dancing  
 Deep in the glassy limpid tide—  
 I thought some fairy rarest,  
 Had playful 'mid the waters gone,  
 Till I saw thee near, my Fairest  
 Bright Shiela gal ni Connolan !

As sunbeam through the blue air,  
 Or light above the ocean's tide,  
 Her flashing glances flew there,  
 And thrilled my very heart inside.

O theirs was all the brightness  
 That shines from heaven's starry van,  
 Their light has darked my lightness—  
 Dear Shiela gal ni Connolan !

I thought to win her graces  
 And love-smile on that rosy morn,  
 In those green islet-places  
 Beneath the shady forest-thorn.  
 But she vowed, with fiery fervour,  
 To never grant her love to man,  
 Till came her Strong to serve her  
 True Shiela gal ni Connolan !

“ No foreign tyrant lover  
 Nor slave who bends to him the knee,  
 Till judgment day be over,  
 Need hope to win a smile from me ;  
 I'll brook not lord in age or  
 In youth, of whatsoever clan,  
 Till come the Gael to wage war  
 For Shiela gal ni Connolan.

“ Then bards and books shall flourish,  
 And gladness light the looks of all,  
 Then gen'rous knights shall nourish  
 Our olden fame of open hall.  
 Brave men and chiefs to lead them  
 Shall flash their spears in valour's van,  
 And glorious days of freedom  
 Crown Shiela gal ni Connolan ! ”

## THE JOYFUL RETURNING

TADG O'NEACHTAIN<sup>1</sup>

HEALTH to the Chief! the Chief! the Chief!  
 Health to the Chief returning—  
     Over the wave,  
     Back to the Brave,  
 Home to the House of Mourning!

Cormac and Conn, and Diarmad Donn,  
 Up and away with sleeping!  
     Night has ended,  
     Dawn descended,  
 Up, to your lances leaping!

This is the time for testing men,—  
 This is the time for trial—  
     Silken store  
     Gold *go léor*,  
 Beer, too, and banquets royal—

Horns of the wine, and cups that shine,  
 Brim for the men who need 'em,  
     Money and mirth,—  
     For Joy of Earth!  
 Hither again comes Freedom!

<sup>1</sup> This name is sometimes written Naughton, and (wrongly) Norton. The bard was probably akin to Seán O'Neachtain who was born in Meath at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and who was (says Hardiman) a distinguished and learned author.

Bells a-tolling, drums a-rolling,  
 Trumpets tell the story !  
     Damsels dancing,  
     Bonfires glancing,—  
 Bright is the path of Glory !

Health to the Exile, banished long—  
 Health to our Chief returning  
     With weal for woe !  
     Friend for foe !  
 And joyful Hope for mourning !

### THE SONG OF ECHO <sup>1</sup>

BRIAN MAC GIOLLA MEIDRE <sup>2</sup>

DÀWN came softly, as a dove,  
     O'er the cove of slumb'ring ocean ;  
 Bending boughs were thrilled, above,  
     With cooing love and sweet commotion.  
 All around from blossomed bowers,  
     Fragrant flow'rs sent odours airy ;  
 Lo, there shone a radiant light—  
     A brilliant, bright, and noble Fairy !

<sup>1</sup> Echo, in Irish, is "Mac Alla : " "Son of the Rock."

<sup>2</sup> This name may be pronounced Mac Gillamery, but is usually (and wrongly) made "Merryman." The bard, who died in 1808, was a native of Clare. He is chiefly known by a long poem, composed in classic metre, the "Midnight Court," in which are told the proceedings of a "Cour d'Amour," which sate to solve problems pertaining to love and marriage. The conception of Echo sorrowing with her country is surely that of a true poet.

Ah, she wept in weary woe,  
 Her accents low, her full tears flowing,  
 Her sobbing sighs came sad and slow,  
 Her tresses go on breezes blowing,  
 Bowed the head that once was high,  
 Dim her eye, with woe and worry,  
 It rent the heart to hear her sigh—  
 So sad, and sick, and sore, and sorry.

“ Now,” she said, “ I’m lorn and lone,  
 As, ’neath stone, a corpse of coldness ;  
 Darts go through me, friends I’ve none,  
 Gone is Thomond’s ancient boldness.  
 Faint my spirit now and sore,  
 Strength is o’er, my heart is breaking ;  
 Down the breeze a venom blows—  
 Cause of woes—a Shrew is shrieking !

“ Long I’ve lain ’neath Druid sway,  
 Whose cry was gay, from hill to hollow ;  
 All I’ve answered, night or day,  
 Faithful still their fate I follow.  
 No horn of Chieftain on the height,—  
 No murmur slight of billow dying,  
 But found responses, loud or light—  
 Thou, aright, heard my replying.

“ Once my accents bore command  
 O’er the land, like mellow thunder :  
 Conn I sang, and Eoghan’s fight,  
 Mac Morna’s might, and Finn, our Wonder !

From wood and scar, I sped afar  
 Of noble war the rolling clangour,  
 My bosom's sword !—now, no such lord  
 Starts from the sward in awful anger.

“ Last I told our grief of griefs,  
 The Flight of Chiefs o'er foreign water ;  
 The Fall of Erin's fairest flow'r,  
 William's power, and Aughrim's slaughter :  
 The bullet flies,—my wild notes rise  
 With battle's cries, and caannon's roaring ;  
 They kill, they kill ;—my wail is shrill  
 A wounded Nation still deploring.

“ Vaunt not yet, though faint I seem,  
 Ye shall not deem Me lost for ever ;  
 Though ruin roll in sullen stream,  
 And Morning's beam appeareth never.  
 I a thousand fights have seen,—  
 And I have been, by fetters, bounded,—  
 And I have served and sung My Queen  
 When foe on foe went under, wounded ! ”

## THE FOREST FAIR

SEÁN O'COILEANN

ONCE beside the corrie  
 Musing sad and sorry,  
 I saw within the forest  
 The fairest maiden dear.

The song of sweet bird follows,  
 Fawn and doe draw near,  
 And from the river hollows  
 The fish leap up to hear.

How curling, gleaming, glowing,  
 Softly, smoothly, blowing,  
 Her tresses full and flowing—  
 A shining Golden Fleece !  
 More fair her teeth and shoulder  
 Than glint of snowy geese,  
 'Twas star-like to behold her  
 With small rose-lips of peace.

She sang her race and story,—  
 Not hers the Gentiles gory—  
 Her heart glowed with the glory  
 Of Heber high and free :  
 Though long her royal lover  
 Did ban of exile dree,  
 Now Conqu'ror he comes over,  
 And Crowned across the sea !

### IN PRAISE OF THE GAELIC

OUR Gaelic speech has high repute,  
 It speaks as soft as breathes the flute,  
 It sings like love notes of the lute,  
 And shines in letters golden.  
 No tongue on earth could e'er compare  
 In tuneful tone and cadence rare,  
 And, O to hear its accents, where

In song and tale  
 Through Innisfail,  
 Of mighty kings and chiefs it sings  
 For Erinn's nation olden !

And Erinn yet shall have her own  
 Right royal princes on the throne,  
 To whom the Gaelic speech is known,  
 And welcome in our sireland.  
 The gentle harp shall sound once more,  
 And prosp'rous be the sons of lore,  
 And, proud, the gallant deeds of yore  
 Before the king  
 The bards will sing  
 And there recall the stories all  
 That give renown to Ireland !

## GRÁINNÉ MAEL<sup>1</sup>

SEÁN CLARACH MAC DONNELL

ABOVE the bay, at dawn of day, I dreamt there came  
 The beautiful—the wonderful—the dear, bright dame !  
 Her clustered hair, with lustre fair, lit all the vale—  
 She came a Star, with fame afar, Our Gráinné Mael !

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced Graunia Wael, the m being modified. This is one of the endearing names given to Ireland in the Penal times.



“ I pray thee hear, O Lady dear, O faultless Fair !  
 Rejoice our souls, with voice that rolls, like music rare ;  
 We're sorrowful,—we're weariful!—our Hope grows pale,  
 For the coming of her promised Love to Gráinné Mael.”

“ O faithfullest and gratefullest of friends, I vow  
 The Night is past, the Light at last will beam forth  
     now,  
 Our warriors, long tarriers, will set swift sail  
 In motion true, o'er ocean blue, to Gráinné Mael !

“ The thrushes seen, in bushes green, are singing loud—  
 ‘ Bid sadness go, and gladness glow,—give welcome  
     proud !  
 The Rover comes, the Lover, whom you long bewail,  
 O'er sunny seas, with honey breeze, to Gráinné  
     Mael ! ’ ”

## THE SKY-MAIDEN

DAVID O'HERLIHY †

THE Flesg's fairy numbers  
 Had sung me to slumbers,  
 'Neath the wide leafy boughs of the wood ;  
     Till I heard sweeter singing  
     Than bird-song or harp-ringing,  
 And beside me a Sky-maiden stood.

† Of Glenflesk, in western Cork. The bard was hereditary Warden of St. Gobnet's church. The Vision is that of Erin.

Young Love tarried nigh her,  
 On man making war  
 With his arrows of fire,  
 Till my heart did unbar—  
 Till he left me a capture  
 To wild-throbbing rapture,  
 In the ray of that bright beaming Star !

The lily of whiteness,  
 The berry of brightness,  
 In combat her fair cheek contest ;  
 Her teeth were the fairest,  
 Her small rose-lips rarest,  
 Her blue eyes made beauty their guest ;  
 Her bosom, soft, beaming,  
 Was snowy and free ;  
 Her neck was, in seeming,  
 The swan on the sea ;  
 From brow, bright and pearly,  
 Her gold curls flowed fairly  
 To her small twinkling feet on the lea.

My heart had been teeming  
 With grief, for in dreaming,  
 I had dreamed of the World and its guile ;  
 But my waking was splendid,  
 My Love-Star had descended,  
 'Mid the green leafy grove of the isle !  
 The sun-sheen poured light on  
 Each bough of each tree,  
 The sun-sheen fell bright on  
 Each grass-tip in glee,—

And my Pearl's sheen was streaming  
 With such brilliance of beaming  
 That good Fortune gave pledges to me !

Where the river is ringing,  
 That Sky-maid is singing,  
 And the birds' mellow music flows clear ;  
 The branches are bowers  
 Of sweet-scented flowers,  
 There is honey in mossy banks near.  
 And hither hares peeping,  
 'Mid wood-creatures stare,  
 The foxes come creeping  
 From out of their lair—  
 All come full of gladness,  
 For Her voice would chase sadness,  
 'T would give joy to the Clansmen of Care !

#### FLORA McDONALD<sup>1</sup>

HAD you seen Flora at dew-dawn alone,  
 Her tresses of gold by the sea-breezes blown,  
 No jewel she wore, but lamenting did go  
 And smiting her fair hands in sorrow and woe.

The briars of the mountains had wounded her sore,  
 Her eyes were like fountains with tears flowing o'er,  
 Her troubled heart forced her a watcher to be  
 In hope of beholding some ship on the sea.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to discover, in Irish, this tribute of song to the brave and loyal Scottish heroine, and to find that it was popular over all Ulster.—O'Kearney, Irish MSS. Royal Irish Academy.

I hearkened, with grieving, the plaint that she made,  
 And fain would have freed her from sorrow's cold shade.  
 She spoke, and her sigh would have rended a stone,  
 "O dark darling Charles, 'tis for thee I make moan.

"They'll follow thee over the heather and scar,  
 A thirsting for blood like the wolves that they are ;  
 Nor e'en let thee lie on the rock cold and bare,  
 To the cave by the billows, they'd follow thee there !

"Why fear they a fugitive, lorn, in defeat—  
 No sentry, save hunger, to guard thy retreat ?  
 Yet 'tis oft in thy perils, by forest and field,  
 The hosts of high Heaven were thy shelter and shield !

"But with Might over Right now oppressors prevail,—  
 Stay, stay !—on the ocean there flashes a sail !—  
 'Tis the foam !"—and in tears died a smile bright and  
     gay,  
 And I turned from her sorrow in silence away.

#### A HEALTH TO KING PHILIP<sup>1</sup>

Now, friends, grasp glasses and fill up,  
     Let your bumpers brimful be ;  
 We'll drink to the health of King Philip  
     And the Child who strays o'er-sea.

<sup>1</sup> Only a portion of this Jacobite song is given ; it is a type of several ballads, varying in metre rather than in ideas. The air to which it is sung supplies an element of interest. O'Daly ("Munster Poets," Second Series) says it is contained in O'Farrell's "Collection of Irish Airs," p. 150—a scarce book.

Too long, he wanders in sorrow,  
 Forgetting our land and lance ;  
 To raise grief from us, to-morrow,  
 I travel to Spain and France.

I pray the bright King of Heaven  
 To cause the oppressors to quail,  
 Exiled from the Woman Bereaven—  
 Our Lady,—our Innis Fail !

Let Stuart sail the seas over,  
 Bring homeward the gallant Lord Clare,—  
 Then joyful she'll greet her True Lover,  
 And foreigners forth shall fare !

## THE ROVER

PEASANT BALLAD, 1797.<sup>1</sup>

No more—no more in Cashel town  
 I'll barter health a-raking,

Dr. W. K. Sullivan, when treating of Irish Airs composed in the gapped and diatonic quinqugrade scale of D, includes this air. "A great many Irish melodies," he writes, "have been composed in this key, and are so very peculiar and different from our modern music, that they have not yet found their way among modern musicians." . . . As specimens he names *Cáilin a stór*, *Drimin duv og*, and *Sláinté Righ Philib*, or "A Health to King Philip."—Sullivan, "Introduction to O'Curry's 'Manners and Customs,'" Vol. I., 1873.

<sup>1</sup> The Irish name "*Spáilpin fánach*," the "Roving Spalpeen," designates one of the flock of migratory labourers, once so common, when tillage was more used in Ireland. The bard was one of those who had been dispossessed in the Penal times ; he joined the roving Bohemian band, but soon put away the sickle for the sword.

Nor on days of fairs rove up and down,  
Nor join the merry-making.  
There mounted farmers came in throng  
To seek to hire me over,—  
Now I'm hired, and my journey's long,  
The journey of the Rover.

I've found, what Rovers often do,  
I trod my health down fairly ;  
That wandering o'er the dawning dew  
Will gather fever early.  
No more shall flail swing o'er my head,  
Nor my hand a spade-shaft cover,  
But the colours of France will float, instead,  
And a pike stand by the Rover.

When to Callan once, with hook in hand,  
I'd go for early shearing,  
Or to Dublin town,—a welcome grand  
Met the Rover gay appearing.  
And soon with savings home I'd go  
And my mother's field delve over,  
But no more—no more this land shall know  
My name as the merry Rover.

Five hundred farewells, Fatherland !  
My loved and lovely Island,—  
And to Culach boys, they'd better stand  
Her guards by glen and highland.  
But now that I am poor and lone,  
A wand'rer,—not in clover—  
It makes my very heart's core moan  
I ever lived a Rover.

In pleasant Kerry lives a girl,  
 A girl whom I love dearly,  
 Her cheek's a rose, her brow's a pearl,  
 And her blue eyes beam so clearly !  
 Her long fair locks fall curling down  
 O'er a breast untouched by lover—  
 More dear than dames with a hundred pound  
 Is she unto the Rover.

Ah, once, indeed, my own men drove  
 My cattle in no small way,  
 With cows, with sheep, with calves, they'd move,  
 With horses, too, to Galway.  
 Christ willed I'd lose each horse and cow  
 And my health but half recover—  
 It breaks my heart for *her* sake now  
 I'm only a sorry Rover.

But when once the French come o'er the main,  
 With stout camps in the valley,  
 With Buck O'Grady back again  
 And poor true Taig O'Dally—  
 The royal barracks shall soon decay,  
 The yeomen we'll chase over,  
 And the Gaelic clann shall bear the sway—  
 'Tis the strong hope of the Rover.

## SONG OF THE DEAD INSURGENT, 1798

MICHAEL ÓG O'LONGAIN †

ON Whit Monday morning,  
 The Goblin-foes begin,  
 They come, with scoff and scorning,  
 And fill the vale with din.  
 We flash the fire before us,  
 We smite around in chorus,  
 We raise the druid-mist o'er us  
 And let the sunshine in !

† The bard was a member of a respectable intellectual family. His grandfather was agent to the Knight of Glyn (Limerick), but when the Knight's brother, by conforming, got possession of the estate, O'Longain refused to serve him. He settled near Carrignavar, in Cork county. As he took part in the Insurrection of 1798, with which his district sympathised, he narrowly escaped death. He was an Irish scholar, as were his son, Michael óg, and his grandson, who was scribe to the Royal Irish Academy. There is poetry in the conception of a dead combatant sending from his Wexford grave a message to his native South. History should take interest in the statement as regards the number of Ulster and Connacht allies who went to battle in Wexford. The fact that Munster did not join generally in the Insurrection of 1798 has not been understood by writers. Its quiescence was the result, not of loyalty to the Irish Parliament or Government, then in the hands of a cabal, but of its Jacobite and anti-Jacobin principles. Many families had kinsmen in "La Brigade irlandaise," and were Royalists; the Reign of Terror, with its massacres, did not win them and drove many of their kindred home. In Ulster and Leinster such intimate relations with the Continent did not exist, and republican enthusiasm spread.



From Ulster came two thousand  
 True heroes to the fray,  
 Like hosts in Connacht rouse and  
 Advance with courage gay.  
 Our rest was short and scanty,  
 We gave them battles twenty,  
 And saw the dead in plenty,  
 At dark'ning close of day.

Take Munster home my greeting,  
 O Comrade, kind and good !  
 And say we faced the meeting  
 And armies strong withstood.  
 Say, children now are cheerless,  
 That maidens once so peerless,  
 With true men, frank and fearless,  
 Are lying in their blood.

My woe on Munster's slumbers,  
 When we rose out to fight,  
 And fronted tyrant numbers  
 With weapons keen and bright.  
 But now that all is over,  
 And fierce foes o'er us hover,  
 Tell Leinster true, I love her  
 Who kept the flame alight !

O youth, if 'mid the Living,  
 They question of that day,  
 And ask you how I've striven  
 And where I passed away—

Then say to each beholder,  
 That no man battled bolder,—  
 Though I, forgotten, moulder,  
 Beneath the mountain clay !

### THE SLIGHT RED STEED

A.D. 1798

I SLEPT, when—O wonder !  
 Dread sounds precede,  
 Thro' south-clouds in thunder  
 Flashed Knight and Steed !  
 “ Ho, bard, dost thou slumber—  
 Or hast thou life ?  
 Rouse, rouse thee—our number  
 Is armed for strife !”

I sprang, pale, affrighted,  
 In visioned dream,  
 All voiceless, benighted,  
 I some time seem ;  
 The sweat-drops rolled under  
 By terror freed,  
 And my soul leaped in wonder  
 On the Slight Red Steed.

Soon, thousands of warriors  
 We stood among,  
 In a lios <sup>1</sup>—armed barriers  
 'Gainst grief and wrong.

<sup>1</sup> Fairy Fort.

Then queried I, sudden,  
 That brave, briht band :  
 "Shall the Gael aye be trodden  
 In their Fathers' Land?"

These tidings of glory  
 Were told to me,  
 By my hand, 'twas a story  
 Of rapturous glee.  
 The spells of Clan London  
 Shall henceforth fail,  
 And their power be undone  
 Before the Gael.

What a joy to our sireland,—  
 What heart's delight—  
 When Freedom to Ireland  
 Comes through the night—  
 Like sunshine adorning  
 The dew-white mead,  
 Through clouds of the morning,  
 On the Slight Red Steed !

## THE GAY AND GALLANT GAEL

CONCOBAR O'RIORDAIN

WHEN the gay and gallant Gael were alive in the Land  
 The lays were lightning flashes, the lore a blazing brand ;  
 Brave and bright-eyed princes met bards with honour  
 grand—

When the gay and gallant Gael were alive in the Land !

Full gracious were the chieftains, the champion men of  
 might,  
 The scatt'ring shatt'ring Spears of Fame, the Shields of  
 Valour bright !  
 Most modest, mild, and mirthful, each beauteous maiden  
 bland,  
 When the gay and gallant Gael were alive in the Land !

Ah, did our fathers live the life, those peerless knights of  
 yore,  
 The Sire of all the Munster land—the dauntless Eógan  
 Mór,  
 Mac Airt, Mac Cuinn, or that high host, the fearless  
 Finnian band—  
 They would drive like shiv'ring sheep the gaunt Gall  
 from the Land.

O, did they live the life again, those hero-hosts so gay,  
 Who fought with Conn the Hundred Fights, with Eógan  
 urged the fray,  
 Or had we here Turgesius's foes—the Gall would flee  
 the strand,  
 And the gay and gallant Gael be alive in the Land !

XII.—EIGHTEENTH CENTURY :  
SONGS OF THE EMOTIONS, ETC.

CEANN DUV DILIS †

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

BLACK head dearest, dearest, dearest !  
Lay thy hand, dearest ! my hand above !  
Small mouth of honey, thyme-scented, sunny—  
No heart that lives could refuse thee love !

The maids of the vale in their sorrow are sighing,  
Their long tresses flying all loose in the wind,  
That I for the sake of my Darling am dying,  
And grieving and leaving those who are kind.

Black head dearest, dearest, dearest !  
Lay thy head, dearest ! my heart above ;  
Small mouth of honey, thyme-scented, sunny—  
No heart that lives could refuse thee love !

† Pronounced Kan doov Deelish. No date was assigned to this poem by Hardiman : it (and possibly others) may belong to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Miss Dora Sigerson (now Mrs. Clement King Shorter) has a true Irish poem with this title ("Poems," Elliot Stock, 1894).

THE DARK GIRL OF THE GLEN <sup>1</sup>

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

O HAVE you seen, or have you heard, the Darling of all  
Delight ?

In glens of gloom, I wander lone, without rest in the day  
or night.

Her quiet eyes distress me, they trouble the heart in  
me—

My blessing go before her still, wherever on earth she be !

What songs have sung thy slender shape, the curve of  
thy graceful brow !

Thy small sweet mouth, that never, I think, could wound  
by deceiving vow,

Thy hand more bright and soft than silk, or down of the  
birds above—

I'm vexed and fretted whenever I think I'd part with the  
girl I love.

So sharp the pang, I faint, I flee, when her presence I do  
behold,

Her glowing cheek, her pearly teeth, her flowing tresses  
of gold,

More bright that sight than Deirdré's self who lowered  
King Conor's pride,

More fair than blue-eyed Blanaid, for whom thousands  
of heroes died.

<sup>1</sup> Original in Miss Brooke's "Reliques of Irish Poetry," 1819.

O, Flower of Maids, forsake me not for glitter of worldly  
 gain,  
 Unsung, unpraised, unprized it is, but by flattery's noisy  
 train—  
 Whilst I would sing brave Irish songs, when harvest  
 nights grow cold,  
 And tell the tale of Fianna chiefs and the warrior Kings  
 of old !

### COME TO THE GREENWOOD <sup>1</sup>

SEÁN O'NEACHTAIN

COME to the Greenwood,  
 Golden-haired maiden !  
 Where the bird-minstrels  
 Carol love-laden.

Thrush with his fluting  
 Charms every carper,  
 Black-bird, the poet,  
 He is our harper !

Wren with his lute-notes  
 Lightens all labour ;  
 Finch has the fiddle,  
 Linnet the tabor.

<sup>1</sup> The Irish original was kindly shown me in proof by Miss Agnes O'Farrelly, M.A., who has edited the poems of O'Neachtain. Owing to the length of the original, I have ventured to abridge and condense. Seán O'Neachtain was, according to Hardiman, born in Meath, at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Lark, with his timbrel  
 Lilting above thee,  
 Bids the bird-chorus  
 Sing how I love thee !

Where mid the marish  
 Heath-bells are blooming,  
 On his low trumpet,  
 Bittern is booming.

Cushat and Cuckoo  
 Croon for thy pleasure ;  
 Sparrow and Swallow,  
 Dance for my Treasure.

Bees in the branches,  
 Haste to rain honey,  
 Right on thy soft lips,  
 Rose-red and sunny.

Wings all a flutter—  
 Cries never ruesome,—  
 Little Saint Robin  
 Flies to thy bosom !

See, yonder Eagle—  
 Kingly his station !—  
 Bows to thy beauty  
 All adoration.

Shore-bird and sea-bird,  
 Curlew and Starling,



All do make merry  
 Seeing my darling !

Echo will welcome,  
 Through the green hollow ;  
 Sweet fairy music  
 Faintly will follow.

Were we together  
 Where the glade darkles,  
 Leaves would around thee  
 Flash in sun-sparkles.

Eden of angels  
 Who'd seek to win it ?  
 This were my heaven—  
 Wert thou, Love, in it !

## THE BARD AND MISFORTUNE

WILLIAM FITZGERALD

### THE BARD

PASS on, Misfortune, much you weary me,  
 Stay not on straw, nor such discomfort dree ;  
 Go forth—silk couches wait you now, and see !  
 What dainty dishes, where red wines run free.

### MISFORTUNE

Not I, my Cousin, hence I will not flee,  
 I've arrows still unsped,—my poet's fee :  
 I'll guide the gray rain through your low roof-tree,  
 And here are thorns of sickness still for thee.

## A FAR FAREWELL

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

'Tis mad to leap the lofty wall, and strain a gallant steed,  
When close beside is the flow'ry fence to vault across at  
need,

O bitter the bright red berries that high on the Rowan  
grow,—

But fresh and sweet the fruit we meet on the fragrant  
plant below.

Farewell, farewell, a thousand times to the green town of  
the trees,

Farewell to every homestead there from o'er the surging  
seas ;

Ah, many a wild and watery way, and many a ridge of  
foam

Keep far apart my lonely heart and the maid I love at  
home.

I move 'mid men but, always, their voices faint away,  
And my mind awakes and I hear again the words her  
dear lips say ;

Her sparkling glance, her glowing cheek, her lovely form  
I see—

As flowers that grow, like flakes of snow, on the black  
and leafless tree.

If you go from me, Vuirneen, safe may you depart !  
Within my bosom I feel it, you've killed my very heart—

No arm can swim, no boat can row, nor bark can mariner  
 guide  
 O'er the waves of that woeful Ocean that our two lives  
 divide.

LAMENT FOR O'CAROLAN THE MINSTREL<sup>1</sup>

BY MAC AIB, 1738

My grief, my wounding, my anguish,  
 My sickness long,  
 Thy sweet harp-chords now languish  
 Without touch or song.

<sup>1</sup> O'Carolan was born at Nobber, Meath, in 1670 ; he lived for a time in Leitrim, died and was buried at Kilonan, Fermanagh, in 1738. This elegy by a brother bard, Mac Aib (now Mac Cabe), shows how greatly he was esteemed and loved by those who knew him. Four notable things he did : (1) He composed many exquisite airs ; (2) adapting words to these, he made a revolution in Irish verse-methods ; (3) his vivacious and inspiriting minstrelsy cheered the heart of his nation throughout the Penal *régime*, and largely contributed to give gaiety a place in the Irish character ; (4) his genius, delighting all classes, made him an honoured guest amongst the Williamites as amongst the Jacobites, softened animosities, and helped to fuse them into one people. He had one failing : at a time when all were convivial, he was convivial ; in the case of stupid persons, who have endowed the world with nothing, this failing is passed over ; in the case of any man whose genius has made him a benefactor, it affords a welcome theme for censure to that impeccable class—the men of no genius.

Who hence shall make music, vying  
 'Mid chiefs, for aye,—  
 Since thou, O my friend, art lying  
 Cold in the clay ?

I rise, I behold, every morning  
 A land woe-smit ;  
 Till black is the west, in mourning  
 On hills I sit.  
 O Saviour, comfort me pleading,—  
 My life's grown dim,  
 My eyes have become two bleeding  
 Founts after him.

Thy life was a poem noble,  
 My king-friend, proud :  
 I go sleepless all night with trouble—  
 My mind one cloud,  
 Through my heart's core pains are flying  
 Of piercing woe,  
 For Toralach O'Carolan lying  
 Lifeless and low.

St. Francis, St. Dominic, listen,  
 St. Clare and all  
 Ye host of the saints, who glisten  
 On heaven's high wall :  
 Give welcome to 'Toralach's spirit  
 Your ramparts among,  
 And the voice of his harp ye shall hear it  
 With glorious song !

## THE DELLS OF ORRERIE

SEÁN CLARACH MAC DONNELL

*Air: "A Feather-bed and Bedsticks"*

THE drowsy dawn  
Half oped his eye,  
A red ray shone  
Across the sky ;  
And o'er dim lawn  
The sun rose high  
In chariot bright and golden !

I wandered then,  
From sorrow free,  
O'er dale and fen  
Of Orrerie,  
Through pleasant glen  
And greenwood lea,  
'Mid mossy trunks and olden.

Not far or wide  
Had been my way,  
Till lo ! I spied  
The graceful fay—  
Of maids the pride  
With heart so gay  
And showers of curling tresses !

Quick leaped I o'er  
The bramble screen,

And bowed before  
 Her beauteous mien,  
 And prayed full sore  
 From her, my queen,  
 A thousand sweet caresses.

Thus sighed my pray'r :  
 " O radiant Sprite !  
 O branch most fair  
 Of beauty bright !  
 'Twill cause despair  
 As black as night  
 If pleasantly you flee not—

" Come, seek some glade  
 Beside the sea,  
 From every shade  
 Or sorrow free,  
 Or, peerless maid,  
 A stór mo chree !<sup>†</sup>  
 In life I'll shortly be not."

" O minstrel, pause—  
 Fair youth, beware !  
 For I must cause  
 That black despair  
 Though ne'er there was  
 A suit more fair—  
 'Tis all lost time and labour !

" For sure you know  
 That God above,  
<sup>†</sup> O treasure of my heart.

Who made earth grow  
 With grass and grove,  
 Said long ago :  
 ‘ Thou shalt not love  
 The wed wife of your neighbour ! ’ ”

MÁIRE NI MILLEÓIN <sup>1</sup>

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

“ WILL you come where golden gorse I mow,  
 Mo Mauria ni Milleóin ? ”  
 “ To bind for you I’ll gladly go,  
 My Share of Life, my own ! ”  
 “ To chapel, too, I would repair  
 Though not to save my soul through prayer—  
 But just to gaze with rapture where  
 You stand, *Mo buachil baun !* ” <sup>2</sup>

“ Will you rove the garden glades with me ?  
 O Flower of Maids, alone ? ”  
 “ What wondrous scenes therein to see,  
 My Share of Life, my own ? ”  
 “ The apples from green boughs to strike,  
 To watch the trout leap from the lake,  
 And caress a pretty colleen, like  
 Mo Mauria ni Milleóin ! ”

<sup>1</sup> Máire ni Milleóin, pronounced Mauria nee Milone : in the vocative Mauria is softened to Vauria, hence in the ballad it becomes Mo Vauria.

<sup>2</sup> My white or fair youth.

“ Will you seek with me the dim church aisle,  
O Mauria ni Milleóin ? ”

“ What pleasant things to see the while  
My Share of Life, my own ? ”

“ We’d list the chanting voice and pray’r  
Of foreign pastor preaching there,  
And we’d finish the marriage with my fair  
White Flower of Maids alone ! ”

She sought the dim church aisle with me,  
My Share of Life, so fair !

She sought the dim church aisle with me,—  
O grief ! O burning care !

I plunged my glitt’ring, keen-edged blade  
In the bosom of that loving maid,  
Till gushed her heart’s blood, warm and red,  
Upon the cold ground there !

“ Alas, what deed is this you do,  
My Share of Life, mo stór <sup>1</sup>

What woeful deed is this you do—  
O youth whom I adore !

Ah, spare your child and me, my love,  
And the seven lands of Earth I’ll rove,  
Ere cause of care to you I prove  
For ever—ever more ! ”

I bore her to the mountain peak,  
The Flower of Maids, so lone !

I bore her to the mountain bleak,  
My thousand loves ! mo vrón ! <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My treasure.

<sup>2</sup> My grief.



I cast my coat around here there  
And 'mid the murky mists of air,  
I fled, with bleeding feet and bare,  
From Mauria ni Milleóin !

## THE SWEET LITTLE CUCKOO

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

'Tis in the night I suffer woe,  
Within my heart the shadows go,  
Since I fell in love with my fair foe—  
    The faultless, high-bred maiden.  
O God, that fate, in an hour of ruth,  
Would bear us both to the Land of Youth,  
Then days of delight would dawn in sooth !  
Friends and foes should stay behind,  
Suitors and sorrows go in the wind,  
    And some cold isle be laid in.

The voice of birds from blossomed tree  
Should give us musical minstrelsie,  
How sweet that these should neighbours be  
    With gladness every morrow !  
For now I am worn with weary pain,  
A full long year I've borne in vain,  
My heart's hot fire still burns amain.  
O Lord of life, look down, I pray,  
Or soon I must lie in the quiet clay,  
    My head brought low with sorrow.

My aged sire, my sister dear,  
 In woe they walk, they live in fear ;  
 My strength is going, the end draws near—  
   'Tis gone the manly bearing ;  
 Through the sinless cause—my love snow-white ;  
 More fair her brow than silver bright,  
 Her lovely face would fill with light  
 The darkest dell of the misty South,  
 And sweeter a kiss from her little mouth  
   Than all the honey of Erinn !

### MY WISHES

PATRICK O'HELIDE <sup>1</sup>

COULD I give to my wishes relief  
   And shape for my lifetime a lease,  
 I would be like the happy old chief,  
   In alliance with no one but—peace.  
 I would make of my acre or two  
   My kingdom and never seek pelf,  
 And large I'd consider it, too,  
   And loyal 'twould be to myself !

My subject, the farm, would grow fat  
   With share of the finest of grain,  
 Which no wetness nor wind should come at  
   Save in welcoming seasons of rain.  
 My castlekin still would be gay  
   And full of all kinds of delight ;  
 And sweet would the song be, by day,  
   And pleasant the book towards night.

<sup>1</sup> This name is now usually written O'Hely or O'Healy.

My cot would be airy to view,  
 In a nook by the wood and the well,  
 Where, on waking, each dawning of dew,  
 I'd hear the sweet bird-music swell.  
 The many-flowered grassy-edged stream  
 Would hum through bright fruit and new corn,  
 And would glitter and glimmer and gleam  
 With trout dancing up to the morn.

To cap all my pleasure and pride,  
 And the comfort of youth to complete,  
 I'd choose me a winsome young bride,  
 Sweet-tempered and comely and neat.  
 Her age should be nineteen, the best,  
 My own should be just twenty-four,  
 And the heart would leap up in my breast  
 To see our babe smile at the door.

## THE CLUSTER OF CURLS

WILLIAM INGLIS<sup>1</sup>

*Air: "Róis geal dub"*

No sweet hope, no gladness  
 Comes ever to me,  
 But deep woe and sadness  
 Wherever I be.

<sup>1</sup> William Inglis (wrongly English) was born at Newcastle, Limerick, taught contraband classics for a time, and wrote some beautiful Gaelic songs. He relinquished song-writing on becoming an Augustinian friar, but made an exception of one humorous satire. He died in 1778 in Cork, and was buried in St. John's Churchyard.

O sistreen <sup>1</sup> of tresses  
 That sweep to the dew,  
 Who caused my distresses  
 Don't keep me in rue !

How fine in its splendour  
 Thy hair flowing down !  
 Thine eyebrows so slender  
 Were formed not to frown.  
 I pine heavy-hearted  
 In pain, night and day,  
 From the Curl-cluster parted  
 By Fate in the way.

O brown head of beauty !  
 Thou'st conquered my heart ;  
 I'm mournful and moody  
 Whenever we part.  
 A Vuirnin ! I sue thee  
 For heaven above,—  
 Thou hast sped the wound thro' me,  
 Then save me, my love !

O bright as the berry's  
 The cheek of my love,  
 As foam by the ferry's  
 Her white brow above.  
 The voice of the maiden's  
 The harp's melody,  
 Its musical cadence  
 Has caused death to me.

<sup>1</sup> Sistreen : Irish diminutive of sister.

I travel the mountain  
All weary and worn,  
My heart is a fountain  
Of tears, for her scorn.  
As I rove, when I ponder  
My love and my woe,  
I ramble, I wander,  
I stray to and fro.

O dearest, O fairest,  
O Love of my breast !  
'Mid the noblest and rarest  
Thy sires were the best.  
I'm wasting in anguish,  
All pleasures have flown ;  
For thy sake I languish,  
For thee I make moan.

Through country, through city,  
Each day of my days,  
Without hope or pity  
I move in a maze.  
I see maidens rarest,  
And still see but Thee,  
Who art fair o'er the fairest  
And dearest to me !

## THE FLOWER OF LOVE

BY WILLIAM INGLIS, 1740

THERE'S a maiden fair to see,  
 A fair maid known to me,  
     With tresses bright,  
     With looks of light,  
 All gladsome grace is she.

The harp gives sweetest notes  
 When her voice of music floats,  
     My woe, my loss !  
     I may not cross  
 With her the brine of boats.

There's a stately maiden seen  
 Of all brave youths the queen—  
     The Star of Love—  
     The Sun above—  
 The golden blithe báibin !<sup>1</sup>

Her heart's a spotless shrine  
 Of noble gifts divine.  
     My loss, my woe !  
     'Twere joy to go  
 With her beyond the brine.

Her curling golden hair,  
 That floats to feet so fair,  
     Floats out to please  
     The laughing breeze,  
 And all our hearts ensnare.

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced baubeen, affectionate diminutive, "little baby."

With voice of tender ruth,  
 She read the Bible's truth :  
     Where'er I rove  
     May Christ's sweet love  
 Keep ward around her youth.

The crimson berry's glow  
 Is on her cheek of snow :  
     What joy, what pride,  
     To win that bride,  
 The Luck of Life below !

But now on the green brine  
 Of barques is floating mine,  
     And I must leave  
     My love to grieve,  
 My Flower of Love to pine.

DOREEN LE POER †

ANDRIAS MAC CUIRTIN, 1737

'Tis woe-smit I've been,  
 And mournful my mien,  
     Through true love,  
     For you, Love,  
 My soft, stately queen.

† A poem of praise, made by the bard in honour of a young lady—a specimen of the *Vers de Société* and Madrigals which helped to grace and sweeten society under the Penal Code.

None deems it disgrace  
To pine for that face,—  
    The fairest,  
    The rarest,  
Of all Adam's race !

Thy small teeth to me  
Seem pearls of Tralee,  
    Thy white breast  
    The bright breast  
Of swan on the sea.

No hand this may know  
Nor thy neck of snow—  
    Their gladness  
    Brings sadness  
And causes my woe.

I start, I awake  
Ere birds in the brake,  
    Lest never  
    I'd ever  
Win worth for her sake.

I grieve, I repine  
The maid is not mine,  
    With palace,  
    In valleys,  
And walls jewelled fine.

The world will not meet  
Such beauty to greet—  
    Glance tender  
    In splendour,  
And mouth music-sweet.



How lovely her mien—  
 The kind, gentle queen !  
 The berry  
 On merry  
 Bright white cheek is seen.

How peerless her grace !  
 How priceless each tress !  
 All Munster  
 Can't once stir  
 When seen her sweet face.

### THE RED FELLOW'S WIFE <sup>1</sup>

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

You'RE welcome, my love !  
 Of girls the fairest young girl !  
 Beauteous above  
 Deirdré, tho' bright as a pearl ;  
 The country I'd fill  
 With conquering clamour and strife,  
 And come to you still—  
 A slave to the Red Fellow's wife !

Love, whiter your neck  
 Than swan that floats on the sea,  
 And redder your cheek  
 Than roses that blush on the tree.

<sup>1</sup> A very popular ballad, in Gaelic, throughout Ireland, South and North.

O sweeter by far  
 Thy mouth than soft song of cuckoo !  
 Thy long tresses are  
 More fine than the silk glossy new.

O peerless young maid,  
 With beauty beaming all o'er,  
 Whate'er may be said—  
 Whoe'er may desire or deplore—  
 In vain were I dumb,  
 They all know what ruins my life,—  
 My heart-wound has come  
 From love of the Red Fellow's wife.

For ever and aye  
 I'd warrant to ward you from ill,  
 Your faithfulest stay  
 If fate did not fetter your will—  
 The tribute of Troy  
 I'd give with merriment rife,  
 If only my Joy  
 Were never the Red Fellow's wife.

O bloom-maid, I breathe  
 A thousand of blessings to thee,  
 I'm wounded to death,  
 And die every minute from thee.  
 My heart could it speak,  
 Would tell how deep went the knife ;  
 Why should it not break ?—  
 My one love's the Red Fellow's wife.

If yonder I lay  
In prison fettered and fast,  
All chains on the clay  
And manacles over me cast—  
As swan to the sea  
I'd fly to that gloomiest life,  
In hope you should be  
No longer the Red Fellow's wife.

## THE BELOVED GAELIC

WILLIAM O'LIONAIN

NEVER was heard a strain so soft—  
A speech so noble—so flood-like oft,  
Yet bright and sweet as a cooing rill,  
Never weak, but all beauteous still.

Never sang Homer, old and grand,  
Nor brilliant Ovid, gay and bland,  
In language more liquid—a cascade that ne'er  
Meets earth, a music that's floating in air !

Than melodious tones of golden chords,  
Than ethereal voices of tuneful birds,  
Its flowing sounds more joy impart,  
And its noble song o'ercomes the heart !

## FAIRY MARY BARRY

AUTHOR UNKNOWN <sup>1</sup>

O FAIRY Mary Barry, I tarry down-hearted,  
Unknown to kith or kin, health and wealth have  
departed.

When I'm going to my bed, or I wake in the morning,  
My thought is still of you and your cold, cruel scorning.

O fairy Mary Barry, take counsel, my bright love,  
Send away the stranger from out of your sight, love ;  
For all his fine airs there's more truth in me, love,  
Then come to me, mo chree !<sup>2</sup> since our parents  
agree, love.

I thought I could coax you with promise and kisses,  
I thought I could coax you with vows and caresses,  
I thought I could coax you ere yellowed the barley—  
You've left me to the New Year with sore sorrow  
early !

'Tis delight unto the earth when your little feet press  
it,—

'Tis delight unto the earth when your sweet singings  
bless it,—

'Tis delight unto the earth when you lie, love, upon  
it—

But, O, his high delight who your heart, love, has  
won it !

A Munster song.

<sup>2</sup> My heart.

I could wander through the streets hand-in-hand with  
my true love.

I would sail the salt seas with no fortune but you, love ;  
My nearest and my dearest I'd leave them for ever—  
You'd raise me from death if you said, "We'll not  
sever."

I gave you, and I gave you, I gave you my whole love,  
On the Festival of Mary, my true heart you stole,  
love ;

With your soft gray eyes like dewdrops on corn  
newly springing,<sup>1</sup>

With the music of your red lips, like sweet starlings  
singing !

I'd toast you, and I'd toast you, I'd toast you right  
gladly,

And if I were on ship-board, I'd toast you less sadly,  
If I were your sweetheart !—through Erinn so wide,  
love,

None could see (here's your bright health !) so happy  
a bride, love !

### LOVE'S LAST APPEAL

*Air : "Cáislán ui Neill" <sup>2</sup>*

O DARLING and true love,  
In early summer, if you come with me

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix : "Green Eyes."

<sup>2</sup> Pronounced Caushlan-o-Nail ; this air is given in Bunting's "Irish Music," p. 15, edition 1797. The words are not fashioned for form's sake, but are the earnest utterance of a breaking heart.

'Mid dim glens of dew, love,  
 Or where the bright sun shineth free—  
 Calves, kine, sheep the whitest  
 For your fortune I'd not take that day,  
 But my hand beneath your white waist  
 And sweet lonely converse with you for aye !

My garden is wasted,  
 Dear love, have you no regret ?  
 Fruits fall now untasted,  
 The grass and the boughs have met.  
 I list not the clearest  
 Soft harp, nor the birds' sweet low wail,  
 Since from me fled my dearest  
 Curled Cooliu to Cáislean O'Neill.

I'll leave not life's battle  
 Till conquered be fortune's fell harms,  
 Till I've won sheep and cattle,  
 And my darling again in my arms :  
 The spare meals of Lent-time  
 I'll quit not on high days of feast—  
 Sweet, swift were the spent-time  
 I'd spend with my head on his breast.

Farewell last even !  
 Ah, would it were back now to me,  
 With the fair youth of Heaven  
 Who caressed me awhile on his knee !  
 I'll say what bereft me  
 Of joy—but let no one know,—  
 My own white love has left me  
 O Mary, O God ! what a woe !

Sickness and Sorrow  
 Are too much around my heart,—  
 The wan tears each morrow  
 To my eyes ever and ever start,  
 For love and love only  
 Of him who has left me nigh dead—  
 I cannot live lonely  
 If the dark mountain maid he should wed.

The people say ever  
 That many a man loves me dear,  
 But never—O never  
 Could I love whilst he is not here :  
 I'd wander far rather  
 Nine days, nine nights, nine weeks and ten,  
 And sloe-berries gather  
 Near my Love's house, to see him again !

You promised me purely  
 You'd love me while green grasses grew,  
 You promised me, surely,  
 One Home between me, Love, and you.  
 My woe on that even  
 When I gave you my heart that was free,  
 O black, O bitter grieving—  
 The World's between you, Love, and me !

## SHAUN O'DEE

PIERS FITZGERALD

I NE'ER believed the story,  
 Prophetic bard ! you sung,  
 How Vulcan, swart and hoary,  
 Won Venus fair and young,—  
 Till I saw the Pearl of Whiteness  
 By kindred forced to be,  
 In her robe of snowy brightness,  
 The bride of Shaun O'Dee !

Nor thought the Spirit holy  
 A bridal would allow,  
 Where Mammon spurs them solely  
 To crown her drooping brow.  
 "The richest weds the rarest"—<sup>1</sup>  
 That truth, alas, I see,  
 Since the sunny pearl and fairest  
 Is bride to Shaun O'Dee.

Were I like most, ere morrow,  
 A dire revenge I'd take,  
 And in his grief and sorrow  
 My burning anguish slake :  
 For gloom o'erclouds my lightness,  
 O woe's my heart to see  
 That form of snowy whiteness  
 Embraced by Shaun O'Dee.

<sup>1</sup> "Mopso Nisa datur" is the quotation in the original.



## A RULE OF LIFE

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

I TRADUCE no man,—my honour to none confide ;  
 If I am traduced, I feel no stain abide.  
 When men sit merry, none merrier is than I,  
 Who in diff'ring minds still find some common tie.

THE CAOINÉ<sup>1</sup> OF THE CHILDREN

FÉLIM MAC CARTHY

I'LL sing their caoiné, if I can—  
 My faultless four, my heart's dear clan ;  
 Since o'er all men I'm lorn to-day,  
 I'll sing their caoiné mournfully.

Frail my life-stay evermore,  
 Death my heart has wounded sore ;  
 I am alone in all the land,  
 No kindred now shall near me stand.

Since I must tell, thus left behind,  
 The cause of tears, with darkened mind,

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced keenia a death-song, equivalent to the Scots' "coronach." Despoiled of his land by confiscation, Féilim McCarthy, a scion of the McCarthys Mór, took refuge amongst the mountains, where he built a shieling. During his absence seeking food, the house fell, in a storm, killing his four children. The poem has the ancient instinct of form, reserve in diction, with intense feeling.

My head is sick to-night from woe,  
My voice, too, faint and trembling low.

Not so sad the young bride's heart,  
Or husband's when their loved depart ;  
Like bird, nest-ruined, is my lot,  
Wailing the young that they live not.

Or like to swans, the waves among,  
When singing their unwilling song,—  
As death comes nigh them and more nigh,  
Singing their dirge with piteous cry.

I'll sing each day until my death,  
A lay which never sweetness hath,  
Though I am worn, and weak and drear,  
I'll sing their dirge—my children dear.

My grief ! in clay lies Callachan,  
By Cormac's side, my sweet-voiced son :  
Anna and Mary, too, my own  
White Loves, beneath the same gray stone.

My children four, without a stain !—  
Few the gifts they did not gain,  
My bleeding heart-wound this, for aye,  
To wail them all, within one day.

The noble boughs of Eber Mór,  
Erinn's prosperous King of yore,  
Are gone from me in youth and bloom  
Unchanged, in beauty, to the tomb.

Theirs no kin of craven brood,  
From Scythian rulers flowed their blood ;  
Miled's <sup>1</sup> offspring, near and far,  
Their kindred brave in truth ye are.

The Spaniard-kings of sharp blue spears  
To these were kin, and these their peers ;  
To them were England's Kings allied,  
In other times, when that gave pride.

Sweet their cries whene'er I'd come,  
Gaily running to greet me home,—  
Who now shall kiss or welcome me,  
Since they, in one grave, buried be?

Unless I looked to Christ—His thorns,  
His anguish, cross, and cruel scorns—  
I'd swiftly join them in the clay  
Or it would wrench my mind away.

On seeing Lazarus lie low,  
Christ mourned for him in pain and woe ;  
With weeping tears His eyes grew dim,—  
Yet He was far from kin to him.

Tis right that I in gloom should weep,  
And lifelong pine in anguish deep,  
After my lost loved children four.—  
The Virgin mother sorrowed sore.

<sup>1</sup> Latinized "Milesius."

Mary did not refrain from tears,  
Her bleeding heart was rent with spears,—  
When He was crucified and scorned.  
I shame not mourning when *she* mourned.

For I have lost my kin most near,  
I am robbed of all most dear,  
In the narrow house of pain I lie,  
Thrice racked with woeful misery.

In hushed midnight of heavy sleep,  
Ah, plundered heart ! ah, ruin deep !  
My stainless four, I lost them all  
In one brief moment tragical.

How oft I thought, when gray age frowned,  
My children dear would gird me round ;  
Not that they to death would go  
And leave me here in helpless woe.

To me my children's love was due,—  
(I gave my whole heart unto you)  
Since I, too, was more aged than they,—  
'Twas meet respect to me they'd pay.

Yet woe is me ! they've left my side,  
Close by my heart they did not bide,  
Nor let me first the dim way pass,  
Because that I have sinned. Alas !

Small my care for sport or rime,  
I'm very lone this little time ;—  
Not sweet to me is harp or "rann,"<sup>1</sup>  
I wander like a witless man.

Gone my aspect, gone my strength,  
I am broken down at length ;  
Death's face alone I care to see,  
Since all my friends are gone from me.

In hushed midnight of heavy sleeping,  
When I am watching, sobbing, weeping,  
My children glide before my woe,  
Seeking that I should with them go.

I see them in the night-time ever,  
From me in no place do they sever ;  
At home, abroad, still near are they,  
Till I go with them to the clay.

Sweet to them that visit made !  
Dear to me each sunbright Shade !  
Full soon I'll follow on their way  
Through God's most blessed will, I pray.

Woe is me, her sorrow's pall,  
Who high affection gave to all,—  
Whose heart gave life and love to each,  
Woe is me her plaining speech !

<sup>1</sup> Song.

Woe is me, her hands now weak  
 With smiting her white palms so meek :  
 Wet her eyes at noon, and broken  
 Her true heart with grief unspoken.

I wonder not at her despair,  
 She has lost life's light most fair.  
 She, o'er all of Erinn's daughters,  
 Has seen the ruin of dark slaughters.

O Glen, which saw this ruin sore,  
 And wrecked all joy for evermore,  
 God's malison fall on thee, dread,  
 In eric <sup>1</sup> for my darlings dead.

Glen-an-áir, the Slaughter-Glen,  
 Be hence thy name amongst all men ;  
 Venom-treason thou'st done to me—  
 And now Accurséd shalt thou be :

May'st thou ne'er see sun, nor noon,  
 May'st thou ne'er see star nor moon,  
 For that thou'st seen a deed of tears  
 Which makes me old before my years.

May never eye behold in thee  
 Flower, nor grass, nor leafy tree,—  
 But dire decay deform thee, ever,  
 By blackened banks and moaning river.

<sup>1</sup> Blood-fine, or vengeance.

## DOWN BY THE STRAND

CHRISTOPHER CONWAY <sup>1</sup>*Air* : " *Since Celia's my foe* "

Down by the strand  
 Lives a young maiden, bland,  
     The fairest,  
     The rarest,—  
 The Flower of the Land.

She's a bough of perfume  
 With ever-bright bloom.  
     'Tis my glory,  
     Her story  
 And deeds to illumine.

Dames I behold,  
 The offspring of gold,  
     All shining,  
     And pining,  
 In jewelry cold :

My heart nevermore  
 Could seek them, mo stór !  
     With thee, love,  
     I'd flee, love,  
 To Italy's shore !

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Conway, of Tigh-na-hala (House of the Swan on the River Laune (Killorglin Parish, Kerry), composed this song in praise of Ellen, daughter of Mac Carthy Mór, his wife. The Conways of Kerry were of noble Welsh descent.

## THE FICKLE FAIR

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

WHEN cease the ducks upon the lake to go,  
 When cease the swans to sail in plumes of snow,  
 When cease the hounds to gnaw the bones, we know  
 Deceit will cease in woman's heart to grow.

## A FAIR FOE

WILLIAM McCOITER

THERE'S a shade on my soul,  
 And my heart is in dole  
 From pearly day dawning till soft even air,  
 With love for the white  
 Fresh Flower of Delight,—  
 With love for the Maid of the fair-flowing hair.

Her mind is a dove,  
 And the wit of my love  
 Is more supple and swift than a bird on the wing;  
 More sweet is her mouth  
 Than wine of the South,  
 Or all the hill honey that Greek poets sing.

To the dew-drops below  
 Her golden curls flow,  
 See, the flame of the berry her smooth cheek upon !



In each little ear,  
 That no picture could peer,  
 There sparkles a jewel as bright as the sun.

Over earth far and wide  
 Could I choose me a bride,  
 And wed a rich daughter of royalty's line ;  
 Through life she could be  
 But a sorrow to me—  
 For the Flower of the World has this poor heart of mine !

### MY SORROW ON THE SEA †

My grief and my sorrow—  
 The great wide sea !  
 It flows night and morrow  
 'Tween my Love and me.

I'm left here despairing,  
 Pining away,  
 No hope o'er it faring  
 For ever and aye.

O woe ! to be with him  
 My Vourneen fair,  
 In the lowlands of Leinster  
 Or highlands of Clare.

† The Irish was taken down from the recital of a poor old woman, living in a hut in the midst of a bog, in Roscommon. See Dr. Hyde's "Love Songs of Connaught" for the original and a spirited version. It is a simple, sincere song of sorrow, yet the true artistic instinct is shown, *e.g.*, in the conclusion where her sudden grief alone implies that the return of her love was a dream.

Last night I was sleeping  
 On rush-bed gray,  
 This morn, I was weeping,  
 And cast it away.

My Love had come to me  
 In swiftest of ships,  
 To comfort, to woo me  
 His lips on my lips.

### THE COUNTY MAYO<sup>1</sup>

ON Patrick Lynch's sailing ship, a-grieving as we go,  
 I pass the night in wailing and all the day in woe ;  
     Were't not my senses dying  
     Far from my country flying,  
 In truth, 'tis I would cry you well, my County Mayo !

While yet my friends were living there, I store of gold  
 could show,  
 Feasts to fair maids giving there, the Spanish wine did  
 flow ;  
     Were Fortune not behind me,  
     With cruel law to bind me,  
 Not Santa Cruz would find me the grave where I must  
 go.

The Plunderers are risen now, and making a fine show,  
 With bows and bags bedizened, and buckles at the toe ;

<sup>1</sup> A charming version of this ballad was made by George Fox. The present version more closely represents the metre and the meaning. The original is the song of some banished man of the Penal time.

Were I but back to-morrow  
 Across the ocean's furrow,  
 I'd make these gentry sorrow, if God would leave it so.  
 Were Patrick Lochlan, Irul's Earl, triumphant o'er the  
 foe,  
 And Colonel Hugh MacGrady, still Lord as long ago,  
 And Brian Dhuv, upstanding,  
 O'er Duachmor commanding—  
 By heaven! 'tis I'd be landing in the County Mayo.

## AN EPIGRAM

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

HE whose paddocks are showing fat herds of kine,  
 He whose harvests o'erflowing fill granaries fine,  
 Sees no kinsmen, when going, if poor they pine,—  
 All are out of his knowing who do not dine !

FAREWELL TO THE MERRY MONGER <sup>1</sup>

SEÁN O TUAMA

FAREWELL, until death, to thy brightness and thy mirth,  
 Farewell from our priests, from the nobles of the Earth,  
 Farewell from the Fair, farewell to thee from all,  
 May it shield thee and shift thy pain's gloomy pall.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, the Mangaire Sugach, a name by which Andrias Mac Craith was usually known. His life, in some respects, resembled that of Burns. Having written a "Farewell to the Maig," when leaving, these verses were composed in reply: they, like others, indicate that a taste for literary composition was then common in Ireland.

My want—my woe—my bitter grief and sorrow !—  
 That the gentlest, the gayest, most generous of sages,  
 The singer of sweet song—now the chill tempest rages,  
 Should wander forlorn, night and morrow.

MacCraith, 'tis to sing of thy merits I have sought,  
 Thou Master of Learning, thou Thinker of bright  
 thought,  
 The darling of damsels, the bard of sunny brow,  
 True scion of Dalcassia's deedful race art thou.

Nigh green Maig river, 'tis woeful now to stand  
 And list the lament of the dwellers in the land,  
 Of the people, the priests, of the lordly and the low,  
 And see maidens mourn and tears in silence flow.

'Tis cause, sure, for gloom and for heaviness of heart,  
 A man should have left us, a faithful friend should part,  
 A bard of true poet-mind, generous of soul,  
 Should wander the peaks in dreariness and dole.

Ah, great is my grief that a mist should overcloud  
 The frank fiery mind of which the land was proud,  
 That woman should lure to darkness and disgrace  
 One who boasts poet-gifts and noble Irish race.

And yet, this has been since the earth was in its youth,  
 Lo, Paris of Troy to testify the truth,—  
 And Ajax, and Jason, for cause well-nigh the same  
 To battle and to die in foreign lands ye came.

And Aengus<sup>1</sup> and David—'twere weariness to mind  
 Of all who found fate for the sake of womankind,  
 Then wail not for aye thy falling from above,  
 Since mightier than thou bore the penalty of Love.

May hardships avoid thee, O dearest to my heart,  
 Be welcomes and gladness and feasts where'er thou art,  
 Be thy sky ever clear and thy spirit ever gay,  
 And my Blessing thy Shield against ev'ry ill for aye.

## THE VISIT OF DEATH

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

O YOUTH, so loved and faithless !  
 You've covered me with grief,  
 You mind not my heart breaking  
 Nor care to give relief.  
 How great shall be your shaming  
 If you save me not from blaming,  
 Who swore upon the Manual<sup>2</sup>  
 To leave me not in grief.

Death will come to seek you  
 A short half-hour ere day,  
 And for each guileful action  
 He'll make you strictly pay.  
 In the small room, lying lonely,  
 The white shroud round you only,  
 How gladly you'd do penance  
 If then found a way ?

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless, Aencas.

<sup>2</sup> Prayer-book.

I was a happy maiden,  
 With gladness in my voice ;  
 You brought the sorrow with you—  
 No more can I rejoice.  
 And now, since you're forsaking,  
 And your path from me are taking,  
 If I die through your heart-breaking  
 How black will seem your choice !

I'd manage all your household  
 With skilful hand so well,  
 Your hose, and shirt, and raiment  
 Would be fairest in the dell.  
 If care or cloud hung o'er you  
 To youth I would restore you—  
 O wed me, and the Glory  
 Of God shall with us dwell !

I had once no lack of clothing,  
 Of food, or dwelling place,  
 I earned good fame and found it  
 Among my kindred race :  
 Nor could Gall or Gael<sup>1</sup> upbraid me  
 Till your false voice—it betrayed me.  
 But the Envoy I send with you  
 Is the Most High King of Grace !

My love ! my heart's own neighbour !  
 How deep to-night my woe,  
 How dark I'll be to-morrow  
 When you from me will go !

<sup>1</sup> Stranger or native, friend or foe.

You've broke death's wall before me  
 The grave's cold breath blows o'er me,  
 Yet take one kiss, my Darling !  
 Before you leave me, so.

## A COMPLIMENT

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

HAD I for ink the Ocean,  
 And Earth for paper white  
 Did ev'ry wing in motion  
 Give me its quills to write,  
 Were my reward the rarest—  
 All Europe's sovran might—  
 Thy virtues, O my Fairest !  
 I never could indite.

## BIRDS ON A BOUGH

*Air: "There was a Maid in Bedlam"*

How pleasant for the small birds  
 To waken in the grove,  
 And, close upon the same bough,  
 To whisper to their love.  
 Not thus, alas, our fortune—  
 My very heart's delight !  
 'Tis far apart each morning  
 We waken to the light.

She's fairer than the lily,  
     Such beauty there is none :  
 She's sweeter than the violin,  
     More lightsome than the sun ;  
 But better than all beauty  
     Her noble heart and free,—  
 O God, who art in heaven,  
     Remove this pain from me !

### LOVELY LOCH LEIN †

THOUGH often I'd rove, through grove, and valley, and  
     mount,  
 From Shannon to Rath, each path, by fort and by fount,  
 I saw not elsewhere so fair and so beauteous a scene  
 As the little white town, the crown of the lovely Loch  
     Lein !

How sweet in its grace, that place with fruit ever fair,  
 The trees white with flowers and showers of scent on the  
     air :  
 Water and boats, where notes of melody pour  
 From Ross Castle tower, the bower of dames we adore !

What damosels fair ! 'tis there is gaiety found,  
 Red wine on the board, a hoard of dainties around ;  
 High chase of the deer, the cheer, and winding of horn,  
 With thrush's sweet song among the branches at morn !

† The lake at Killarney. Cf. for inlaid rime :  
 "Martinus mirus *more ore* laudavit deum."



I've wandered brown Beare, from there to Erne in the  
 North—  
 I've watched, in the west, the best of its beauty and  
 worth—  
 But afar or anear, the peer I never have seen  
 Of the fairy-fond place, whose grace is the lovely Loch  
 Lein !

### THE VICTOR MAIDEN

PATRICK O'CONNOR

*Air : "Cashel of Munster"*

My heart is o'erladen with sorrow and strife—  
 The love of a maiden has wounded my life ;  
 Astray among strangers afar I have been,  
 But the peer of that dear one I never have seen.

Her beauty so rare is—to love her is best !  
 The snow not so fair is ; how swan-like her breast !  
 Her words' tuneful measure all music's above—  
 It wounds me with pleasure the voice of my Love !

Her curls in their clusters are rippled and rolled,  
 The sheen of their lustre's like billowy gold ;  
 So radiant her glances I faint with delight,—  
 For beauty entrances and great is love's might !

How pure is her brow and how fair her cheek glows  
 With the whiteness of snow and a blush of the rose !  
 Her breast is a bower of blossoming joy—  
 More beauteous that flower than was Helen of Troy.

Her soft taper fingers are skilful as fair,  
 How graceful she lingers o'er broideries rare !  
 As swiftly she sketches from lake and from land,  
 How featly she fetches each bird at command !

Though long, proud, and stately, from women afar,  
 'Mid chiefs gay and great lay my revel and war,  
 To this Victor I yield me to serve as love's slave,  
 For fight cannot shield me, and flight cannot save !

### AXIOMS

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

No Lazy Wealth can think with Hunger's mind,  
 Yet Lazy always leaves a lack behind :  
 No love of woman woos decrepit Age,  
 And Death waits not for Beauty's equipage.

### AN ELEGY

A.D. 1782

IN Abbey ground,<sup>1</sup> by the wild western sea,  
 The true Knight rests, safe-shielded, Stone, by thee.  
 Here oft the Tiarna led the galloping band—  
 Now his home-coming saddens all the land.

<sup>1</sup> This lament is a superior specimen of the elegiac Irish style. It will be noticed that the concluding words of each stanza are repeated at the beginning of the next, and that those which terminate the poem are identical with its opening words. This is the classic form. The Elegy has been held in esteem and is still recited. I have several versions taken from oral recitations, and Dr. Douglas Hyde kindly brought under my notice a written transcript (made in 1832), kept in

The land held high his generous renown  
 From Beare to Diarra, from Lee to Liffey brown,  
 From Galway west to southernmost Cape Clear,  
 Kilkenny to Loch Cé—afar, anear.

Anear, afar, how mournful maids and men !  
 And every eye is wet by hill and glen ;  
 The Suir o'erflowed, methinks, the hills rent wide,  
 The Skellig,<sup>†</sup> shrieking, said " A Man has died ! "

A Man has died. In grief all darkens o'er,  
 From Scarriff's Bay, from Deen, and far Timore  
 To the last sunset isle, no sail I see ;  
 Valentia mourns with tears wept bitterly.

O bitterly cry Ards and Coom the keene,  
 And Ballinskelligs, where no lack hath been  
 Of sea-borne wine and welcomes as to home—  
 The Giver greeting all who choose to come.

Who chose to come of that glad hall were free,  
 With meat, brown ale, and honey from the bee—

the Royal Irish Academy. This gives the author's name as Tadg Rua O'Sullivan, whilst local tradition (which supplied more accurate versions) ascribes it to Diarmad O'Shea, who lived in the last century. The subject of the Elegy was Francis Sigerson, whose ancestors were lords of the manor of Ballinskelligs before the Cromwellian confiscations. It is most interesting to meet with such a Gaelic dirge, and to find that Irish rivers, mountains, seas, and people lamented so deeply the descendant of a Norseman.

<sup>†</sup> The Skellig Isles, off the south-west coast of Kerry, one of which belonged, with Ballinskelligs, Coom, Ards, &c., to the subject of this Elegy.

Through Christ's sweet will, he surely shall have rest,  
Francis, whose welcome cheered the poorest guest.

Guest, void of all, with want his only friend,  
Found shield and succour, kindness to the end,  
Linsens and woollens where the tall looms stand,  
Gifts hid in gifts and red wine in his hand.

O handsome Hawk, who tower'd the country o'er !  
Top-spray of all who sprang from Segerson More !  
And pure thy mother's blood, Clann Connell's old,—  
Thou dashing chief—thou joyous hand with gold.

Clean gold with poverty well shared away,  
O head of Counsel still,—the people's stay ;  
'Tis my belief from Skellig west, to Cove  
No heart alive could match thy heart of love.

Love thy life's rule, from life's dawn till its night,  
How many a wrong that rule humane made right,  
How many a grief it chased and bitter moan—  
Now the Church grieves for thee, here, lying lone.

Lone here and dead. 'Tis this makes heav'n dark,  
From Rath to Ruachty, o'er mountain, sea, and bark :  
What his hand gathered for the Lamb he gave,  
The lofty, faultless Tree, our princely chieftain brave.

White chief of mankind, true Cavalier all o'er,  
None e'er repelling, never closing door,  
Gloom-sad the Gael, because our strength is low,  
Eclipsed our souls, and wails the Voice of Woe.

Woe o'er Iveragh's woods and waters wide—  
 My wound! the stedfast generous man who died;  
 Not hard the way to ope with papal keys,  
 Lord, grant the Peace-maker Thy perfect peace.

Peace to give peace where he may not return  
 To heal our hurt, to light the eyes that mourn;  
 Shield of our hearts, our strength in sorrow found,—  
 My grief, my woe!—the Chief laid low, in Abbey  
 ground.

## LOVE'S SUNSHINE

AUTHOR UNKNOWN<sup>1</sup>

O LOVE, and O Treasure, art sick or in sorrow?  
 I've pined for thy coming, all lonely:  
 Gone is all pleasure,—by night and by morrow,  
 I mourn for thee, ever and only.  
 That thou couldst distress me, who fain would caress thee,  
 Is surely the wonderful wonder;  
 Arise, O bright Sun! give the light of thy morning  
 And my clouds it will scatter asunder.

Alas, and alas!—'tis my heart is dying,  
 To have ever been born must still grieve me;  
 My wand'ring mind is around thee flying—  
 My Hope, and my Life, do not leave me!

<sup>1</sup> Hardiman's "Minstrelsy" (abridged). The last two lines of the first stanza anticipated, and may have suggested, the central thought in Tennyson's lines:

"Shine out, little head, running over with curls,  
 To the flowers and be their sun."

Come, Wayward and Froward ;—come now, toward  
 The home that ere now should have seen us ;  
 Come, Dearest and Rarest !—and Love true and fairest  
 Shall ever abide there between us !

“ORO MOR, O MOREEN”<sup>1</sup>

IMITATED FROM THE IRISH

DAINTY maid is Mary,  
 When she goes a-marketing ;  
 Dainty in her dairy,  
 Setting every heart to sing.  
     Oro, Mor, O Moreen !  
     Oro, Mor, art coming now ?  
     Oro Mor, O Moreen  
     O Coolin óir, art coming now ?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Petrie's "Ancient Music," p. 120, an Irish song is given with this chorus, but it is addressed to a young man, and the chorus is evidently adopted from a previous song,—which is here invented in imitation of the Irish. This seems to be its history : a playful satire was addressed to a maiden, and she answered it by a similar address, where the fisher youth is represented as excusing his delays because his shirt was not smoothed, his socks were not darned, a mountain rock fell upon him ; it concludes by wishing wreck to his coracle if he should not come on the appointed day.

<sup>2</sup> Mor is the name of a female, and Moreen (*rectè* Moirin) is its diminutive, Coolin (Cuilin) óir means "Chevelure of gold." In pronunciation, in the vocative, the "m" is softened to "w" and the "c" to "h" thus : "oro wór o wóreen"—"O hoolin óre."

She was saying, and saying,  
     Saying she would surely come ;  
 But her ruffles went a-straying :  
     That is why she stayed at home.  
         Oro Mor, O Moreen,  
         Oro Mor, art coming now ?  
         Oro Mor, O Moreen,  
         O Coolin óir ! art coming now ?

She was saying, and saying,  
     Promising she'd come away ;  
 But the brindled bat was baying :  
     That is why she had to stay.  
         Oro Mor, O Moreen,  
         Oro Mor, art coming now ?  
         Oro Mor, O Moreen,  
         O Coolin óir ! art coming now ?

She was saying, and saying,  
     Promising she'd swiftly come ;  
 But the moon had gone a-maying :  
     That is why she stayed at home !  
         Oro Mor, O Moreen,  
         Oro Mor, art coming now ?  
         Oro Mor, O Moreen  
         O Coolin óir ! art coming now ?

YOU REMEMBER THAT EVENING.<sup>1</sup>

You remember that evening  
 At my window still staying,  
 Bare-headed and gloveless  
 For love, long delaying :  
 I stretch'd my hand to you,  
 You clasp'd it, caressing ;  
 And we kept in soft converse  
 Till the lark sang his blessing.

You remember that evening  
 We spent both together,  
 'Neath the red-berried Rowan  
 In still snowy weather.  
 Your white throat was singing,  
 Your head on my shoulder—  
 Ne'er thought I, that evening,  
 That love could grow colder.

My heart in you !—darling !  
 Come soon to me, hither,  
 When my household are sleeping  
 To whisper together :  
 My two hands shall clasp you,  
 While my story is given,  
 How your soft and sweet converse  
 Took my prospect of Heaven.

<sup>1</sup> A peasant ballad. The Irish words, noted by O'Curry, are given in Petrie's "Ancient Music of Ireland," Vol. I., p. 142.



## THE SHEPHERD'S PET

AUTHOR UNKNOWN <sup>1</sup>

I wish the shepherd's pet were mine,  
I wish the shepherd's pet were mine,  
I wish the shepherd's pet were mine—  
His snowy lamb, no other.

And O I'm calling, calling you,  
Love, my heart is all in you,  
And O I'm calling, calling you,  
The white pet of your mother.

I wish I had a herd of kine,  
I wish I had a herd of kine,  
I wish I had a herd of kine  
And Mollie from her mother!

And O I'm calling, calling you,  
Love, my heart is all in you,  
And O I'm calling, calling you,  
The bright pet of your mother!

<sup>1</sup> A simple peasant song, taken from the singing of a blind man, in Clare; quoted in Petrie's "Ancient Music of Ireland," Vol. I., p. 43, whose first three lines are here given.

## MY SUMMER

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

SHE's the White Flower of the Berry,  
She's the Bright Bloom of the Cherry,  
She's the fairest, noblest Maiden  
That ever saw the day :

She's my pulse, my love, my pleasure,  
She's the Apple's sweet bloom-treasure,  
She's Summer 'mid the storm-time  
'Tween Christmas and the May !

## A WISH

I WOULD the Apple-bloom I were,  
Or the little daisy only,  
Or red rose in the garden, where  
Thou'rt wont to wander lonely,  
In hope some day thine eyes would stay  
And or my flow'rets choose some,  
To bear in thy bright hand away  
Or wear in thy sweet bosom.

## LOVE'S DESPAIR

DIARMAD O'CURNAIN<sup>1</sup>

I AM desolate,  
Bereft by bitter fate ;  
No cure beneath the skies can save me,  
No cure on sea or strand,  
Nor in any human hand—  
But hers, this paining wound who gave me.

I know not night from day,  
Nor thrush from cuckoo gray,  
Nor cloud from the sun that shines above thee—  
Nor freezing cold from heat,  
Nor friend—if friend I meet—  
I but know—heart's love !—I love thee.

Love that my Life began,  
Love, that will close life's span,  
Love that grows ever by love-giving :  
Love, from the first to last,  
Love, till all life be passed,  
Love that loves on after living !

<sup>1</sup> O'Curnain was born in Cork in 1740, and died in Modeligo, Waterford, in the first quarter of the last century. He was a tall, handsome young farmer. He travelled to Cork to purchase wedding presents for his betrothed, but was met on his way home by the news that she had married a wealthy suitor. He flung all his presents into the fire, and, from the shock, lost his reason, which he never recovered. He was known to several persons recently alive.

This love I gave to thee,  
 For pain love has given me,  
 Love that can fail or falter never—  
 But, spite of earth above,  
 Guards thee, my Flower of love,  
 Thou Marvel-maid of life for ever.

Bear all things evidence,  
 Thou art my very sense,  
 My past, my present, and my morrow !  
 All else on earth is crossed,  
 All in the world is lost—  
 Lost all—but the great love-gift of sorrow.

My life not life, but death ;  
 My voice not voice—a breath ;  
 No sleep, no quiet—thinking ever  
 On thy fair phantom face,  
 Queen eyes and royal grace,  
 Lost loveliness that leaves me never.

I pray thee grant but this,—  
 From thy dear mouth one kiss,  
 That the pang of death-despair pass over  
 Or bid make ready nigh  
 The place where I shall lie,  
 For aye, thy leal and silent lover.

XIII.—FOLK-SONGS, LULLABIES,  
OCCUPATION-CHANTS, AND  
MARINER'S SONG

IRISH LULLABY

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

I'LL put you, myself, my baby, to slumber,  
Not as 'tis done by the clownish number,—  
A yellow blanket and coarse sheet bringing,  
But in golden cradle that softly swinging  
    To and fro, lu la lo,  
    To and fro, my bonnie baby !  
    To and fro, lu la lo,  
    To and fro, my own sweet baby !

I'll put you, myself, my baby, to slumber,  
On sunniest day of the pleasant summer,  
Your golden cradle on smooth lawn laying,  
'Neath murmuring boughs that the birds are swaying  
    To and fro, lu la lo,  
    To and fro, my bonnie baby !  
    To and fro, lu la lo,  
    To and fro, my own sweet baby !

Slumber, my babe ! may the sweet sleep woo you,  
 And from your slumbers may health come to you—  
 May all diseases now flee and fear you,  
 May sickness and sorrow never come near you !

To and fro, lu la lo,  
 To and fro, my bonnie baby !  
 To and fro, lu la lo,  
 To and fro, my own sweet baby !

Slumber, my babe ! may the sweet sleep woo you,  
 And from your slumbers may health come to you,  
 May bright dreams come, and come no other,  
 And I be never a sonless mother !

To and fro, lu la lo,  
 To and fro, my bonnie baby !  
 To and fro, lu la lo,  
 To and fro, my own sweet baby !

### FAIRY LULLABY

O WOMAN, washing by the river !  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 My woeful wail wilt pity never ?  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine.  
 A year this day, I was snatched for ever,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 To the green hill fort where thorn trees shiver  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine  
 Shoheen, shoheen, shoheen, shoheen,  
 Sho-hu-lo, sho-hu-lo,  
 Shoheen, shoheen, shoheen, shoheen,  
 'Tis not thou my baby O !

'Tis there the fairy court is holden,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 And there is new ale, there is olden,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 And there are combs of honey golden,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 And there lie men in bonds enfolden,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine.

Shoheen, &c.

How many there, of fairest faces !  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 Bright-eyed boys, with manly graces !  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 Gold-haired girls with curling tresses !  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 —There, mothers nurse with sad caresses,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine.

Shoheen, &c.

Ah, bid my husband haste to-morrow,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 A waxen taper he shall borrow,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 A black knife bring to cross my sorrow,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 And stab their first steed coming thoro',  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine.

Shoheen, &c.

Say, pluck the herb where gate-thorns quiver,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,  
 And wish a wish that God deliver,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine,

If he come not then—he need come never,  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine.  
 For they'll make me Fairy Queen for ever !  
 Hush-a-by, babe not mine !  
     Shoheen, shoheen, shoheen, shoheen,  
     Sho-hu-lo, sho-hu-lo,  
     Shoheen, shoheen, shoheen, shoheen,  
     'Tis not thou my baby O !

### BABE WILL BE UNEASY”

CITRUAG O'DAIGENAIN <sup>1</sup>

AND O bo, my baby bright !  
 Do you know a woman's way ?  
 'Tis I, myself, that learned it right  
 Whatsoe'er she seem to say.  
 Is she sick, or is she slow,  
 Is her soft heart sinking low,  
 If dad don't kiss the nurse, I know  
     Babe will be uneasy !  
 If wine of wines you bring to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy !  
 Give all the birds that sing to her,  
 Fruits from Roe to Ring to her,  
 The country of a king to her.  
 Unless a kiss you bring to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy !  
 If Limerick you gave to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy !  
 And Cork so bright and brave to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy !

<sup>1</sup> O'Kearney Irish MSS., Royal Irish Academy.



Gems that monarchs crave, to her,  
 Give gold that fills a cave to her,  
 If no caress you gave to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy !  
 Wine were want and miss to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy !  
 Norway's flock no bliss to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy ?  
 Gold a hate and hiss to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy !  
 Unless you give a kiss to her,  
     Babe will be uneasy !

## SMITH'S SONG

IMITATED FROM THE IRISH

DING dong didero,  
     Blow big bellows,  
 Ding dong didero,  
     Black coal yellows,  
 Ding dong didero,  
     Blue steel mellows  
 Ding dong didero,  
     Strike !—good fellows.  
 Up with the hammers,  
     Down with the sledges,  
 Hark to the clamours,  
     Pound now the edges,  
 Work it and watch it,  
     Round, flat, or square O,  
 Spade, hook, or hatchet—  
 Sword for a hero.

Ding dong didero,  
     Ding dong didero,  
 Spade for a labourer,  
     Sword for a hero,  
 Hammer it, stout smith,  
     Rightly, lightly,  
 Hammer it, hammer it,  
     Hammer at it brightly.

### PLOUGHMAN'S RIME

PLOUGHMAN.

“HASTE, and hurry, and speed,  
 The beldame's sluggard steed,  
 Leap up, Tom, take heed  
     And see if our dinner is near.”

THIRDMAN.

“'Tis a sowing,”	“Haste, and hurry, and speed.”
“'Tis a growing,”	“Haste, and hurry, and speed.”
“'Tis a-mowing.”	“Haste, and hurry, and speed.”
“Home 'tis going.”	“Haste, and hurry, and speed.”
“Fire's a-blowing,”	“Haste, and hurry, and speed.”
“Cook's a-glowing.”	“Haste, and hurry, and speed.”
“Here, 'tis showing !”	

PLOUGHMAN.

“Cheer, and cherish, in deed,  
 The good wife's gay young steed,

Off with bridle, forth with feed—  
Now that our dinner is here.”

## SPINNERS' SONG

“ LOOREEN, o loora, loora, laura †  
Run by the river, and find me my lover.”

“ Looreen, o looreen, loora, laura,  
'Tis Flann O'Keeffe I'll fetch for you over.”

“ Looreen, o loora, loora, laura,  
His cattle are plenty in meadows of clover.”

“ Looreen, o loora, loora, laura,  
Run by the river and find me my lover.”

“ Looreen, o loora, loora, laura,  
'Tis Cormac Fada I'll fetch for you over.”

“ Looreen, o loora, loora, laura,  
His head is in Dublin, his heels are in Dover.”

## MALLO LÉRO

## SPINNERS' SONG

“ MALLO léro is im bo néro  
I wandered the wood, when dews were pearly,  
Mallo léro is im bo bán.”

“ Mallo léro is im bo néro  
For Conn O'Carrol you roved so early  
Mallo léro is im bo bán.”

† Lúirin o lúrtha, lúrtha, lártha. See Appendix.

“Mallo léro is im bo néro  
 With withy waist set him ploughing barely  
 Mallo léro is im bo bán.”

“Mallo léro is im bo néro  
 You mannerless maid, he'd match you fairly,  
 Mallo léro is im bo bán.”

“Mallo léro is im bo néro  
 Nay, find me the man I love so rarely  
 “Mallo léro is im bo bán.”

“Mallo léro is im bo néro  
 Take and be happy with Tom O'Harely  
 Mallo léro is im bo bán.”

“Mallo léro is im bo néro,  
 I welcome, I take, I hail him fairly  
 Mallo léro is im bo bán.”

“Mallo léro is im bo néro  
 Then ne'er may you part, or late or early  
 Mallo léro is im bo bán.”

## ORO, O DARLING FAIR

### SPINNERS' SONG

“ORO, O darling fair ! and ioro O Fairness fair !  
 Who's the young maid to be wed upon Shrove-tide  
 there ?

Oro, O darling fair ! O lamb, and O love !”

“Oro, O darling fair ! and ioro O Fairness fair !  
 Maid to be married I hear is sweet Annie Clare,  
 Oro, O darling fair ! O lamb, and O love !”

“Oro, O darling fair! and ioro O Fairness fair!  
 Who’s the glad youth upon whom fell this happy air?  
 Oro, O darling fair! O lamb, and O love!”

“Oro, O darling fair! and ioro O Fairness fair!  
 Florence O’Driscoll they say has the luck so rare,  
 Oro, O darling fair! O lamb, and O love!”

“Oro, O darling fair! and ioro O Fairness fair!  
 What is the outfit they give to the wedded pair?  
 Oro, O darling fair! O lamb, and O love!”

“Oro, O darling fair! and ioro O Fairness fair!  
 Feathers the finest that ever had bird in air,  
 Linen the whitest that ever the spindle bare,  
 Quilting of silk that is softest beyond compare,  
 Candlesticks golden, graceful and carved with care,  
 Red and white pieces in pocket to spend and spare,  
 Plenty on board with gay guests to gladly share,—  
 Victory I wish them, that Joy may be ever there!  
 Oro, O darling fair! O lamb, and O love!”

## THE MARINER’S HYMN

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

BARK, bravest in battle of billow and breeze!  
 True tower in the tempest, dry deck in the seas!  
 When flash the wild waters, in mountains of might!  
 You leap through the breakers with bounds of delight!

The high, bright tide! the high, bright tide!  
 Queen of my heart, my joy, my pride!  
 My beautiful bark on the high, bright tide!

With robes from the Indies I've dighted my fair,  
 How swells her white bosom against the blue air !  
 Right buoyant the craft below, shapely the sail,  
 And, O God ! but to see her rise out of the gale !

On the high, bright tide ! the high, bright tide !  
 Queen of my heart, my joy, my pride !  
 My beautiful bark on the high, bright tide !

"Gray Deelan, who stand with unchangeable brow,  
 Behold how the surges race off from her prow,  
 Behold, and give judgment if ever you've seen  
 Bark on the waters to peer with my queen."

On the high, bright tide ! the high, bright tide !  
 Queen of my heart, my joy, my pride !  
 My beautiful bark on thy high, bright tide !

Then answered gray Deelan : "Since first I withstood  
 The roar-rush of ocean's tumultuous flood,  
 By night and day watch I, but never could mark  
 From seaward or shoreward, a bark like thy bark !"

On the high, bright tide ! the high, bright tide !  
 Queen of my heart, my joy, my pride !  
 My beautiful bark on the high, bright tide !

"Lord of the heavens !" the mariners pray,  
 "Give succour, give shelter, keep, keep her away !  
 She cleaves the blue billows, she comes like a flash,  
 And through us and o'er us she'll instantly dash !"—

On the high, bright tide ! the high, bright tide !  
 Queen of my heart, my joy, my pride !  
 My beautiful bark on the high, bright tide !

## XIV.—PARAPHRASES FROM THE GAELIC

### THE KING'S LAY<sup>1</sup>

#### I

THE Hill of all Supremacy was void  
Of rule supreme. For seven years, no King  
Had entered there, nor thence gone forth in state,  
With chief and bard and royal equipage,  
To make procession through the Land of Erin,  
And all was ill. There crept a faint gray mist  
Across the fair face of the Island then,  
And darkness came on many hearts, and slow  
Forebodings grew, and petty enmities  
Were omens of a mighty wrath to come.  
Peace was no more, although the Isle was still  
And all her shoreward seas and curvèd bays  
Unvexed by sharp prows from the snowy North.  
Fate hung in air, as hangs a towering hawk  
O'er silenced woods. Whereat the Land was moved

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased from a passage in the "Sick-bed of Cuchulainn and only Jealousy of Emer," Atlantis, Vol. I. See Appendix.

As by one thought, to cast away the cause,  
Not loving thus to see fair Tara void,  
Discrowned, and desolate, her glory gone ;  
Not loving that the Kingship of the Land  
Should be without a King to judge supreme,  
And make procession through the Land of Erin,  
Redressing wrongs and making good the Right,  
Ruling the kings and settling all dispute,  
Welding more closely the white bond of love  
That linked in one the Great Five Chieftainries.  
So all the scattered chiefs arose and sped  
Their gathering chariots to the Hill of Kings,  
Whose bright-browed fortress glances o'er the green  
And tremulous sea of branches, like a moon  
New-risen.

The clangour ceased ; they entered, still,  
The Court of Niafer, by mystic rite  
To find what man should rule the royal fort.  
Lo, in their midst, the Chiefs of all the Druids  
Came ; in their midst a stripling stood, new robed  
In vesture white that fell in myriad folds.  
Then him Four Druids gave to eat the heart  
Divided, of the spotless, snow-white bull ;  
And when he ate, they made deep slumber drown  
His form inert, and, glimm'ring round, pronounced  
The magic charm that wrought the Dream of Truth.  
Silent they stood awhile, and all repressed  
The anxious throbbing of their hurried hearts.  
Listless in sleep he lay till, suddenly,  
Lifting his right hand slowly toward the North,  
He murmured words that died within his throat :  
His arm returning fell across his heart.



And yet a little time and, suddenly,  
 Half-rising up, with eager-bending brow,  
 Stretching his hand unto the North, he spake  
 With accent now assured, and full : " Behold !"  
 And then, at once, upstarting to his feet,  
 He made low rev'ence to the Unseen Man  
 And cried aloud : " All hail, my lord the King !  
 All hail, O noble hero, crimson-flecked,  
 Sitting beside the Mournful Chieftain there  
 In fair Emania : thou, in all great deeds,  
 His worthy pupil, peer, and truest friend !"  
 This when they heard, the Chiefs sent forth a Chief  
 Who, journeying through the long glades of the woods,  
 And fording mighty rivers in his way,  
 Came swift to fair Emania in the North.

Then, sending round his glances he beheld  
 Eastward, the palace of the Crimson Branch,  
 And on his left he saw the Speckled Mansion  
 Solemn and still, and in the sun, before  
 The great White Palace of the Royal Branch  
 And hosts of knights were swarming round its door  
 Passing and re-passing, for all Ulad  
 Had gathered here to greet their King, and watch  
 The mournful sickness in the Speckled House.  
 The herald Chieftain smote upon a door  
 In the great Palace of the Royal Branch,  
 And he was led before the King, who naught  
 Would hear, till feasts were spread, and humming chords  
 From lines of lofty harps had wiled away  
 The irksome burthen of long journeying :—  
 For such was aye the custom of the Realm.  
 Three days had passed ; he stood before the King,

And showed to him the weighty charge he bore.  
 King Conco-bar of Ulad answering him,  
 Replied : " There is with us a noble, free,  
 And high-descended hero, crimson-flecked,  
 Sitting beside a Mournful Chieftain here  
 In fair Emania, and in all great deeds  
 His worthy pupil, peer, and truest friend."

Then forth they fared : the King, the Envoy-Chief  
 And all the Council from the Royal Branch  
 Unto the Speckled Mansion in the West ;  
 And entering soft they saw Cuchulainn lie  
 Upon his couch of sad decline, and there  
 Stood over him to solace and to speed  
 The heavy hours of mournfulness away  
 Our noble Lugai of the Crimson Hand.

When he had heard the Envoy, Lugai spake  
 With rising anger as at insult done  
 And all the nobleness of ardent youth :  
 " Even for 'Tara's self, I will not leave  
 This couch of sickness where Cuchulainn lies.  
 Doleful his room of darkness would become  
 Were I afar, but not so sad and lone  
 As the darked chamber of my heart, while he  
 Lay all forsaken by his pupil here."

But then Cuchulainn, rising slow and weak,  
 Above his couch of sad decline, stood tall  
 And grand once more ; and on his Lugai's head  
 He laid his hand, so strong,—and now so worn :  
 " Thou now hast given thee a charge, my son,  
 Beside which private bonds must seem as naught ;—  
 Go forth !—and from thy glory there will come  
 New life into my heart, and I will live

In sorrow less, that I may see thee rule  
 According to the best weal of thy Land,  
 And see thy Land grow happy under thee,  
 And see thy praises in the greater deeds  
 That, following thee, all Erin shall perform !”

He then, recalling from the Past the things  
 He ever taught, and to show forth the ways  
 That most become a King, did speak this Lay :

## II

“ In the Time—  
 In the red Time of Battles,—  
 When the foeman advances,  
     With a myriad of glaives  
 And a myriad of lances,  
     When slaves  
 Shrink back from the terrible chime  
 Which the War-harp out-rattles  
     Whose chords  
 Are the jubilant Warriors’ swords—  
     Be thou  
     The Torch of the Brave :  
     Not timid, oppressed, or unready  
     In woe or affright,  
     But Man in his might,  
 Clear-glancing, and fearless, and steady,  
     Ready the foeman to smite,  
 Ready the friend and the foeman to save,  
     Calm and intrepid of brow,—  
     Even as now.

“ In peace or in war  
   Dwell not afar  
 From the voice of thy people, nor hide  
 Thy heart in the purple of pride ;  
   Bend down thine ear,  
 Let the doors to thy mansion be wide,  
   Let the pathway be clear  
   So that all thou shalt hear,  
 And the injured shall come to thy side.  
   Never be passionate,  
   Never precipitate ;  
   Never intoxicate  
 With that which of evils is worst,  
   Which deadens the health  
   Of Mind, and makes Earth  
 Seem a wilderness drear and accurst,  
   If it yield but a dearth  
 To him, who thus lusteth, of Wealth.

“ In all of thy regal processions,  
 In the mansions of welcoming kings,  
   Show thou the example  
 How little the lofty mind clings  
 To feasting and mead ;—and a sample  
   Of temperance also be thou  
   Whenever a stranger  
   Come 'mid thy possessions,  
   Shield him from danger,  
   And guard him from wrong ;  
 Let courtesy sit in thy heart and thy brow,  
   Let him be gladdened, but thou  
   Hast duties, so wield them—

See that the feasts be not many nor long :  
 In such there is danger,  
 In such there is wrong,  
 From ills of each kind thou must shield him.

“Let not thy path lie among  
 Men who are plotters of guile,  
 Men who are doers of wrong.  
 If any  
 A tract of the lands of thine Isle  
 Have got them by fraud or by wile,  
 By lie, or by might,  
 Though many  
 A year may have rolled on its way,  
 And the hair of their youth have grown gray,—  
 Let them not rest !  
 Let not the Wrong be as Right !  
 Call witnesses quickly together,  
 Ask the historians whether  
 Their scrolls can declare  
 The descendants of him,—the true heir,  
 Him whom their guile dispossess'd ;  
 Seek the clear truth  
 Recalling the past into life.  
 Lo, then  
 Having found,  
 'Mid their fraudulent actions, the Right—  
 Arise, without slowness or ruth,  
 Arise, in thy sternness and might,  
 And gather thy men,  
 And drive them, with vigorous strife  
 With sword and with javelin, afar,

And for ever and ever debar  
 Their return to the ground.

“ Be sparing of words,  
 Be calm and not loud in thy speech ;  
 Loving to think—  
 Knowing 'tis easier to cross o'er the fords  
 When the flood is not flush with the brink,  
 And the waters are clear  
 And the currents not loud, are but low—  
 Knowing 'tis easier to reach  
 The Truth which abideth beyond  
 The River of Words,  
 In the still bark of Thought, when slow  
 Is the rush of that River.  
 Thus be thou ever,  
 And wear  
 In thy dutiful bosom, a fond  
 Respect for the Good, who are old ;  
 Even forbear  
 To mock or deride those who never  
 Have earned the regard of the Bold,  
 Of the Good, and the True,  
 But whom Age bringeth grieving, and rue,  
 Deep woe and despair.

“ My son !  
 Be thou kindly disposed towards all ;—  
 Thinking evil of none,  
 Till their deeds show their sorrowful fall ;  
 Do evil to none,  
 From those who offend thee demand

Not things over bitter to bear.  
     Be gentle, be merciful, and  
     Open of hand.  
 If thou hast wronged any, by chance,  
     Be not shamed, but declare  
 Thine error, and yield him his share.  
     Set forth all the righteous laws  
     That the Isle may advance,  
 Knowing the truth of its cause.  
     Hearken  
 And follow the words of the Wise,  
     Remember the rules of thy Fathers,  
 Let the knowledge of Age be a star to thine eyes  
     When shadows surround thee, and darken  
     The goal which thou seekest.  
     Be firmest, but meekest ;  
     So striving that ever  
     The great bond which gathers  
 Thy girdle of free friends may never  
     Slacken, nor sunder, nor sever.

“ Bear with them, bear for them, endure  
     Much that their circle increase  
     In purity, honour, and peace.  
     With thy foes  
 Be strong, word-keeping, and sure.  
 Be courteous, nor taunt with their woes  
     Those who have suffered defeat.  
 Let the taunts of thine enemies pass—  
 Let thy captives abuse and defame—  
     Their tattle  
 May writhe like snakes to thy feet,

But weaker than withering grass  
In the flame.  
Thou shalt be nobler, and scorn  
Their tauntings or threats to return  
In peace or in battle.

“Spend not thy time  
In riotous waste,  
Nor lean to the contrary crime,  
Hoard not thy wealth, and  
Alienate never thy land.  
Give answering calm, without haste ;  
And bear,  
With thy wrath all unmoved,  
To hearken thy conduct reprov'd  
And thy Counsellors blame thee,  
And thy deeds, if they were  
Not such as became thee.

“Sacrifice naught  
Of thy truth to the wishes of man ;  
Nor even in thought  
Let men's wickedness fan  
The fire of thine anger to hate  
Lest thou do even them  
An injustice, through loathing  
Their former misdeed,  
And discover it, late.  
Take care and good heed  
For Truth is a king's diadem,  
And Justice his clothing !



Release not thy capture  
 But with bond of security given,  
 Lest, when his fetters are riven,  
     Wrath and not rapture  
     Should run through his veins,  
 And, knowing thy force and thy land,  
 He should come with a ravaging band  
 To be venged for captivity's stains.

" Let not thy heart  
     Sink into slumber and sloth,  
 Lest thou shouldst shrink from thy duty,  
     Lest thou be loth  
     To act the true part,  
     And thy glory depart  
 And the Will, and the Power, and the Beauty  
     Which exist in the might  
     To repress and redress  
     The Evil and Wrong—  
 To bring kindness and mercy to light  
 And uphold the fair Banner of Right  
     With the hand of the Strong.

" Ask not a favour  
     Again, if refused thee at first ;  
 For the mind becomes mean,  
     If the heart be a craver ;  
 And a subtle Enslaver,  
     A Torturer vilest and worst.  
 Is the Yearning obscene,  
     The immodest Desire,  
 For that which belongs to another,

Whom the soul grows to hate, and not love as a brother ;  
 And will fall from its higher  
 Emotions and cease to aspire,  
 And smoulder 'mid passions accurst.

“ Do not compete,  
 Being zealous,  
 With thy subjects in action or feat,  
 Lest thou be jealous ;  
 And wish not their glory, but that they should meet  
 With sorrow, o'erthrow, and defeat.  
 Nor forget that a King  
 Whom his people elect  
 Should be stainless of heart and blameless of mind,  
 Of courage and honour unflecked,—  
 Loving his clans with a loving refined ;  
 Should joy in their gladness, grieve in their grief,  
 Toil to give light to their blind,  
 Toil till true happiness sing  
 In the homes of the Rich and the Poor,—  
 A Palace of Purity,  
 A Wall of Security,  
 He alone, be thou sure,  
 Is truly their King, and their Prince, and their Chief.<sup>1</sup>”

<sup>1</sup> In the course of a complimentary criticism of the First Edition in *The Pall Mall Magazine*, Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch, referring to this paraphrase, remarked : “ I am wondering if the likeness between it and Mr. George Meredith's ‘The Empty Purse’ be a mere coincidence.” I had not then read this poem, but having read it I find the similarity in form is unmistakable. However, my verses were first published in 1860, in a Dublin weekly paper, which doubtless never reached Mr. Meredith. The coincidence is curious.

THE BLESSING OF DUBLIN.<sup>1</sup>

CHILL and dead

Lies the King of Dublin's son :  
At his head

Sits gray Alpin, stern and still,  
Neither eat nor drink he will,  
Till the Earth have had her fill,  
And Valhall be won.

Patrick came,

Lauding loud of holier things,  
Flashed the flame

From the Viking eyes : "Can He,  
Maker of all things, make *be*  
That which is no more for me ?  
Thy King of Kings !

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased from a passage in *Leabar na g-Ceart*, "The Book of Rights." This work is supposed to have been written by Cuan O'Lochain, Chief Legislator of Erinn, after Clontarf, and the death of Brian Boruma. The passage is attributed in this book to St. Banean (sometimes made Benignus), St. Patrick's disciple. If he were the author, it proves the antiquity and good repute of the Norse settlement ; if, on the other hand, Cuan O'Lochain be the author, then it is even more valuable. For it is a testimony, borne after the battle of Clontarf, by the most eminent Gael of Erinn, to the high estimation in which the Norse-Irish of Dublin were held by the contemporary Gael. They are shown to the nation at large as enjoying the fruits of the blessing of the Apostle of Erinn, in eleven special gifts. This of itself would condemn the partisan views of some rude moderns, who appear to be impartially ignorant of the opinions of St. Patrick, St. Banean, and Cuan O'Lochain.

“Speak the word,  
 Let the sovran deed be done,  
 Then, thy Lord  
 Lord of mine is—Lord of all—  
 Each a liegeman at his call,  
 Bows in battle, horns in hall,  
 For him—my son !”

Patrick prayed,  
 Moving as the sun moves round ;  
 Naught dismayed,  
 King and jarls thrice followed him,  
 Heard, with understanding dim,  
 Of the mystic murmured hymn,  
 The strange weird sound.

Then great dread  
 Fell upon them, and behold !  
 Stood the Dead  
 In their midst, erect, with gaze  
 Fixed on them, in mute amaze,  
 Lit with red returning rays,  
 The visage cold.

Said the king,  
 Standing with his war-men nigh,  
 “For this thing  
 We are vassals to thy Lord,  
 Followers fast by field and fiord,  
 True at trysting, staunch at sword,  
 Sea, shore, or sky !

“ I pronounce  
 Tribute to this King of thine :  
 Each an ounce  
 Weighed aright of ruddy gold  
 Ev’ry year shall be thrice told,  
 From the Northman’s Dublin hold,  
 At Macha’s shrine.”<sup>1</sup>

Patrick raised  
 His right hand in benediction,  
 “ God be praised !  
 If the toll be paid each year,  
 Not the world need Dublin fear :  
 Else, three times the Gaelic spear  
 Shall bring affliction.

“ Gifts eleven,  
 Guerdons, in return shall fall,  
 From high Heaven :  
 Goodly wives the wives shall be,  
 The men live manful and die free,  
 Beauty still the maidens’ fee  
 Of the pure proud Gall.

“ Feats of swimming  
 Mark the youth, sea-loved, sea-strong ;  
 Bright horns brimming,  
 Welcome all to bounteous board,  
 Gift of war-triumphant sword,  
 Gift of trophies, many a hoard,  
 Make its glory long.

<sup>1</sup> Ard-Macha, the height of Macha, now Armagh, the primatial see of Ireland.

“ Champions brave,  
     Gallant kings to bear the crown  
 On land and wave,  
     Gift of commerce from all parts,  
     Gift of ever-widening marts,—  
     Gift in church of reverent hearts,  
     Bless stout Dublin town.

“ Through the haze  
     Whence, in long succeeding lines,  
 Come our days—  
     I behold ascending spires :  
     When to Darkness all retires,  
     One of Erinn’s last Three Fires,  
     The Fire of Dublin shines.

“ Tara proud  
     Over woods upstanding airy,  
 Not thus crowd  
     Gracious gifts around thy name,  
     From Tara here this day I came,  
     Great its mighty monarch’s fame,—  
     My curse on Laéré ! ”

Patrick spoke :  
     Benean, I, have shaped this lay,  
 With measured stroke  
     In the right-resounding rime,  
     That his words in every clime  
     Should re-echo through all Time  
     Till the Judgment Day.

## APPENDIX

### THE ANCIENT IRISH

THOUGH it is now common to apply the epithet "Celtic" to the old inhabitants of Ireland, I have preferred to write of them as the "Ancient Irish," that being a term less exclusive and more exact. Some English historians have given currency to the strange fallacy that the Angle and Saxon colonists extinguished the Britons, whom the Roman legions could not annihilate. They overlook the fact that the policy of invaders was usually to retain the natives as their vassals. In Ireland a similar fallacy obtains. The Milesian invaders are now generally supposed to have superseded completely the former owners of the island. This is essentially a modern fancy, founded on ignorance; for the elder Irish historians—often Milesians themselves—not only admit but emphasise the fact that the population of the country was composed of different races.

The island, according to them, was in the possession of a northern Scandinavian colony—the Tuata Dé Dananns—when a southern race, the Milesians, coming from Spain, invaded the country. The Fomorians, a northern people also, occasionally harried the coasts and effected temporary settlements. There were some minor colonists of inferior importance.

Mac Firbis (A.D. 1650), in his book of the "Genealogies of the Colonies of Erin," includes the lines of the Fomorians, the Lochlanns (Norsemen), and the "Sax-Normans," so far as these connect with Ireland. He quotes from an ancient writer these characteristics of the great earlier colonists:—

"Everyone who is fair-haired, vengeful, large, and every plunderer, the professors of musical and entertaining performances: who are adepts in all druidical and magical arts; they are the descendants of the Tuata Dé Dananns in Erin."

He also mentions that the greater part of their nobles (or higher classes) were full of learning and druidism. All old accounts agree that they were pre-eminently skilled in the arts and sciences, including medicine.

"Everyone who is white (of skin) brown (of hair), bold, honourable, daring, prosperous, bountiful in the bestowal of property, wealth, and rings, and who is not afraid of battle or combat; they are the descendants of the sons of Milesius, in Erin." [They had bards, harpers, and learned men, but their predominant character was that of a militant race.]

Lastly: "Everyone who is black-haired, who is a tattler, guileful, tale-telling, noisy, contemptible; every wretched, mean, strolling, unsteady, harsh, and inhospitable person; every slave, every mean thief, every churl, everyone who loves not to listen to music and entertainment, the disturbers of every council and of every assembly, and the promoters of discord among people, these are the descendants of the Firbolgs, of the Gailiuns, of Liogairné, and of the Domnanns, in Erin. The descendants of the Firbolgs are the most numerous of these."



The Irish have always held a firm belief in the influence of heredity, but Mac Firbis judiciously notes that the intermixture of races must be taken into account.

Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the mysticism which some now assign to the Celts, Gaels, Scots, or Milesians, was ascribed by this very people to its predecessors, the Tuata Dé Dananns. The latter formed a world of Faery for the Celts.

#### AMERGIN'S LAYS (pp. 109-111).

According to the historical legend, Ireland was invaded from the south, in the year of the world 3500, by Milesius and his followers. They found the isle in the possession of a fair and highly gifted race, the Dé Dananns.

It is related that when the Milesians landed, a conference took place with the kings of the island: these offered, if the Milesians withdrew for three days, they would decide upon one of three courses, namely: retire, submit, or fight. Amergin (brother to Miled, or Milesius), a bard, druid, and judge, was chosen as arbiter. He decided that the island belonged of right to the Dé Dananns, and that his kindred should withdraw over nine green waves. If then they could land again and conquer, the island should belong to them by the right of battle. Accepting this judgment they set out from Inver-scene (Kenmare Bay), over nine green waves, to sea. The Druids and poets of Erin by their incantations raised so violent a storm that the vessels were driven westward and separated. "This is a Druidic wind," said Dōnn, son of Milesius. "It is," replied Amergin, "if it does not blow above the masthead."

Then Aranan, Donn's youngest brother and helmsman, went aloft and discovered that the upper air was calm. "It was treacherous of our soothsayers," exclaimed Donn, "not to have prevented this Druidic wind." "There was no treason," replied Amergin. Thereupon Amergin stood up and chanted his "Incantation." This strange poem is unquestionably very ancient, and pre-Christian, but of course its exact date is uncertain. It is composed in "Conaclon," the end word of one line rimes to the first word of the line following, and indeed the rime is sometimes secured by repeating the word. Alliteration of two initials is also sought and usually obtained. These characters can be seen in the following specimen :

Ailim iath n **ereann**,  
 Ermac **muir molach**,  
**Molach** sliab **sreatach**  
**Sreatach** coill ciotach.

These characters are of exceeding interest, since they prove that the rime-sense was well developed in the very ancient Irish. Amergin's "Song of Triumph," composed when he landed, differs much in metre, being irregular, and appears to dispense with rime, so that it might pass as the first example of blank verse. Even alliteration seems rather avoided than desired in the shorter lines, though permitted in the longer. It seems to me, however, that Amergin may have intended a mode of rime altogether overlooked, which I would call "entrance-rime,"—each of the shorter lines begins with the verb "am" (I am), and the repetition of this accented word sufficed.

This triumph song has been called the "Mystery of Amergin," in the "Lyra Celtica" of Dr. and Mrs. Sharp; some, with Dr. D'Arbois Jubainville and my friend Dr. Douglas Hyde, see a pantheistic spirit in it. That is possible, of course; still I think it open to another interpretation. This archaic poem is glossed by old Irish writers in the Books of Leacan and Ballymote, and by the O'Clerys. Professor Connellan gives these glosses with his translation. They have it that Amergin declares he is the wind at sea, in subtle action; the billow, in overwhelming power; the roar of ocean, in terrific approach; a bird of prey on a rock, in cunning or keen vigilance; a sun ray, for clearness; a salmon in a river (known to it) for swiftness; and a lake on a plain for extent, or magic greatness.

This view is supported by the fact that, in later but still ancient bardic verses, enigmatic metaphors were much affected, and needed explanation by the author. Amergin might have written "I am the sun after leaving the stars," and left us in doubt; but when Dallan so describes a king, the bard himself explains: "'Thou sun after leaving the stars,' that is when the sun has left its stars, this is the time its figure is best, and not better is its countenance than thine." My contention is conclusively proved by the existence of another poem, identical in form and structure, in which Cuchulainn (in the "Battle of Ros-na-ree") makes his vaunting song, like Amergin. He uses similar expressions, as "I am a fire avenging floods," "I am a fierce flaming lion," with others which are unmistakably personal vaunts—not pantheistic, but pan-egoistic.

## THE FIRST ELEGY (p. 112)

O'Reilly, in his work on Ancient Irish Writers, says that though the language of this poem does not seem so old as that of Amergin, it is undoubtedly of "great antiquity." Lugai, son of Ith, was nephew to Milesius, whose daughter he married. He was therefore a contemporary of Amergin: his words may have been modified by copyists. His poem presents a most noteworthy instance of remarkable riming skill:

Suideam sund uas an *tracht*  
 Ainbteach *fuacht*  
 Crit for mo ded adbal *echt*  
*Ec dom ruacht*  
 Aisneidim duib atbad *bean*  
 Brogais *blad*  
 Fail a hainm, fris niad *neam*  
 Os grian *glan*  
 Adbal *eg, ecc dom ruacht*  
 Cruaid rom *claid*  
 Nocht a *fir, ar ro sil,*  
 Siu ro *suid.*<sup>1</sup>

This short poem shows parallelism, alliteration, vowel rime, and consonant rime (*e.g.*, *fuacht, ruacht*), I have endeavoured to reproduce the peculiarities exactly in English.

The short peculiar rhythm may be intended to remind one of the rocking of a boat.

<sup>1</sup> This is quoted from "Transactions of the Ossianic Society," Vol. V. (though I have omitted h's, as too confusing; my versions of these archaic pieces are founded on translations of Connellan (3) and O'Curry (1), but some passages were not clear to these scholars,

THE FATE OF THE SONS OF USNACH<sup>1</sup> (pp. 124-128)

This is the first of "The Three Sorrows of Story." Though now presented as a heroic romance, interspersed with poems, it appears to me probable that this romance form covers, and partly conceals, a more ancient drama. If this be so, then it is a mistake to search for an Epic in what is really a Tragedy.

Let us see how this idea will work out.

First we have the Prologue, in which a short account of the genesis of the drama is related.

King Concohar of Ulster was feasting at his Story-sayer's house, when the wife of the latter bore a child, hereafter known as Deirdré (Alarm). The king's Druid declared her fateful of evil; the nobles decided she should die, but Concohar ordered that she be bred apart, as his betrothed. In the lone fort she grew up with her nurse Lebarcam and her tutor only. On a day she saw a raven drink of a pool of blood in the snow. "Would I had a youth with those hues," she said, "raven-hued his hair, blood-hued his cheek, snow-hued his skin." Lebarcam secretly brought Naisi, of the king's household, to her nursling, and they fled to Alba (Scotland) with his two brothers, and a company of warriors. The Alban king gave them quarters; but seeing Deirdré's beauty, claimed her: Naisi defeated him, and took possession of a region by the western sea. The champions of Erin lament his exile and hard fortune.

Now comes the drama itself. The tale at the slightest touch falls into five acts. The great passions of Love, Jealousy, and Revenge, accompanied by Treachery and

"Proceedings of the Gaelic Society," Dublin, 1812.

War, tread the stage ; while a mystic over-world is shadowed forth in Deirdré's visionary warnings, and the Druid's potent spell. It may be thus arranged :

### ACT I.

*Scene I.*—King Conobar presides in the Royal Banquet Hall of Emania, amidst the nobles, bards, musicians, historians, and heralds of his realm. When song, music, story, and pedigree have ended, the king raising his voice, questions if any saw hall more fair, and if aught be lacking. They cry out in praise and negation. But he : “There is a lack : the Three Torches of Gaelic Valour are absent. Envoys shall go for them.” All hail his clemency. One of three champions—Conall, Cuchulainn, or Fergus—must be Naisi's guarantor. Conobar takes each apart, and asks what he would do if Usnach's Sons were slain. Conall and Cuchulainn declare they would slay all who harmed them—Fergus that he would spare the king alone. Fergus is chosen, and sent with his two sons, pledged, however, to speed his wards to Emania when they land, be it day or night.

*Scene II.*—The exiles are in their hunting booth of woven boughs, at Loch Etive, in Alba. Naisi and Deirdré sit, playing chess. A sound comes over the water : “That is the call of a man of Erinn,” says Naisi, raising his head. Deirdré twice dissuades him, pressing the game. At the third call Naisi orders his brother, Ardan, to meet the envoys. Then Deirdré, confessing she knew the sound, tells her first premonition. She had had a dream that three ravens came with honey in their beaks, who flew away with drops of their blood instead.



*Scene III.*—Ardan enters with the three envoys, Fergus and his sons, Fair Illan and Red Buiné. After cordial greetings news is asked of Erinn, and Fergus tells how they come with sweetest news, Concobar's sanction for their return, under Fergus's guarantee. Deirdré dissuades them: their sway is greater in Alba than Concobar's in Erinn. But Fergus pleads "Better is one's country than all things else, for 'tis unpleasing, however great be the power and prosperity, if we see not our native land each day." "True," said Naisi, "dearer is Erinn than Alba to me, though greater my sway in Alba." The guarantee of Fergus secures his trust.

*Scene IV.*—Their bark has left the shore, and Deirdré looking back at the receding mountains sings her sad, sweet lay of Farewell, recalling all the happiness that filled the glens when the four dwelt there together.

## ACT II.

*Scene I.*—They land on the northern shore of Erinn. Chief Barach welcomes them to his mansion, with great display of feeling, thrice kissing each of his guests. Then he bids Fergus to a banquet. Now Fergus was pledged to speed his wards at once to Emania, but it was one of his bonds as a knight not to refuse such an invitation. He reddened with wrath and vexation, and divining the plot of Concobar's vassal, vehemently reproaches Barach. But the latter holds him to his bond.

*Scene II.*—Fergus lays the matter before the Sons of Usnach, for whom he is bond—a tacit appeal. But Deirdré cries out: "Forsake the feast; forsake not the Sons of Usnach." Fergus pleads that he sends his sons

with them. Naisi haughtily remarks that "this was much for him, but they were wont to be their own defence." They depart, leaving Fergus to his suffering.

*Scene III.*—Journeying through forests and wilds, Deirdré suggests that they retire to the isle of Rathlin till the feast be over: Naisi refuses to retire. The sons of Fergus recall his potent guarantee and their presence. Then Deirdré having fallen again into visioned sleep, relates that she had seen Fair Illan beheaded, and Red Buiné unhurt, and foretells the latter's treachery.

*Scene IV.*—They stand at last upon the Height of Willows, overlooking fair Emania. Deirdré points to the Cloud of Blood which hangs above the fateful city, and implores Naisi to pass it by and go to Cuchulainn in Dundelgan, returning to Emania when Fergus should be free. Naisi would not deign to show sign of fear, and then Deirdré sang her last lay of warning, in which she tenderly reminded him how he and she had never differed in the old days. "Take it for an omen of treachery," she says, "if Concobar receive us not in his mansion amongst his nobles, but send us to the Red Branch Mansion."

### ACT III.

*Scene I.*—King Concobar is banqueting amongst his nobles once more. They hear knocking without, at the gate of Emania. The king gives orders that if the Sons of Usnach come they shall be entertained in the Red Branch Mansion. Then, after a time, Concobar calls for one to go and report if Deirdré be still beautiful as before. Her nurse Lebarcam accepts the mission.



*Scene II.*—Naisi and Deirdré are also, once again, seated at the chess table. Lebarcam enters and embraces them in delight and anguish. She warns them of the deathless jealousy, enmity, and treachery of the king, bidding to close and barricade the Red Branch House, and keep keen watch. She sings her song of sorrow.

*Scene III.*—Lebarcam returns to the monarch's hall, with the good news that the Sons of Usnach are so mighty that with them he could now conquer Erin, and the ill tidings that Deirdré's beauty had passed away. This lulls Concobar's jealousy ; but after a time he called for another spy. None offering he reminds Trendorn that Naisi had killed his father. Trendorn goes out, and afterwards returns wounded. He had found the mansion barred and closed, save one forgotten casement. He looked in. Deirdré turning, saw his face, and he hers ; she spoke to Naisi, who flung a chessman which smote him through the eye. "He who made that cast," said Concobar, "would conquer a kingdom if his life were left him. What of Deirdré?" "Deirdré is the most beautiful woman alive," says the spy. Then the king's jealous rage bursts bounds : he commands an instant attack on the Red Branch, and the banquet is broken up in disorder.

#### ACT IV.

*Scene I.*—Inside the hall of the Red Branch. Three fierce shouts are heard without ; and the flash of torches gleams through the casement slits. Naisi challenges the assailants : "Who come?" "Concobar and Ulster," is the answer. Naisi resumes chess-playing, leaving the matter to his guarantors. Illan calls the king to respect

the guarantee of Fergus. The wrathful monarch demands revenge on those who bore off his bride. Deirdré bitterly denounces the treason of Fergus. "If he have betrayed thee, so shall not I," cried Red Buiné. He rushes forth. The crash of arms is heard from Buiné's victor-raid. Then a pause. Deirdré looking out from her place of espial, reports that Buiné and Concobar are parleying. She hears their words: the king has offered their champion lands and dignities. He accepts. "Fit son of a false father," she cries.

*Scene II.*—Fair Illan dons his arms: "while lives this small straight sword in my hand I will not betray you," he says. He rushes forth, shouts of terror are heard, and Illan returns triumphant to where Naisi and Ainlé are seated playing chess. Forth again he goes, with a lighted torch in his left hand, and clears a space around the house, littering it with dead.

*Scene III.*—"Where is Fiacra, my son?" cries Concobar: Fiacra appears, and the king commands him to encounter Illan, his equal in age. "He bears his father's arms: take thou mine—Ocean my shield, my victor-darts, my green glaive." The young champions meet in fierce battle. Illan drives down Fiacra beneath the shield. Then a strange weird hollow sound arises—the roar of Concobar's shield for its bearer's peril. From afar the three Great Waves of Erin answer roaring back. Called by them to save his king, as he thought, Conall comes rushing to the field, and smites Illan from behind. They speak, and Conall learns the dread truth. "By my hand of valour," exclaims Conall, "Concobar shall take his son dead in vengeance for his treason." He strikes off Fiacra's head, and flees.

Then Illan, flinging his arms into the house he had protected, bids Naisi defend himself, and dies.

#### ACT V.

*Scene I.*—The flare of flames shows the Ultonians advancing to fire the house. Airlé strides forth, makes his battle raid, and drives them off. Next Ardan goes forth and returns in triumph. Lastly Naisi—then Conco-bar gives the “Battle of the Morning”; the Ultonians flee before the outrush of the Three Champions and their men, who remain victorious.

*Scene II.*—Conco-bar appeals to Catbad, his Druid. He urges that all Ultonians will be destroyed, unless his magic power impede it, and pledges his hero-word that harm shall not befall the Sons of Usnach if they submit. The Druid, hearing this, exerts his science, and the Sons of Usnach feel as though surrounded by “a viscid sea of whelming waves,” and the earth seems to vanish beneath them.

*Scene III.*—The Three Champions strive for a time. Their weapons at last fall from their hands. Then the Ultonians approach and make them captive. Conco-bar commands that they be killed. None obeys the order, till a Norse prince, whose father and brother Naisi had killed, consents. Each of the younger brothers asks to be slain first: Naisi demands that they all be beheaded together by the keen sword of Manannan. It is done. Three shouts of heavy lamentation arise from the Ultonians.

*Scene IV.*—Deirdré stands alone, all distraught, her golden tresses dishevelled and torn. She recites aloud

the heroic feats, great adventures, and deeds of friendship of her beloved Naisi, and of his faithful brethren. The glory of past happiness is evoked, and she sings their death-song in tearless anguish. "After this lay, Deirdré flung herself upon Naisi in the grave, and died forthwith." The Ultonians raise their cairn (tomb) and inscribe their names in Ogham.

*Scene V.*—Solitary on a rock, the dread figure of the deceived Druid appears, amid a weird mist of enchantment. He stretches forth his hands over Emania, and utters the terrible malediction against the royal city, its false king, and the Ultonians, so that the city shall be burned to the ground by Fergus, that nor Conobar nor his race shall rule in it for ever, and that wailing and anguish shall not cease in Ulster, by day or by night, till that generation perish.

From this outline, it will be seen how naturally the tale resolves itself into a Tragedy. There is manifestly dramatic purpose shown in repeating the opening royal banquet-scene, followed by the peaceful chess-scene of Act I., under contrasting circumstances in Act III. The characters are well sustained, and the heroine is kept prominent. It is difficult to suppose its characters were never impersonated by male and female actors—declaiming their different parts. The lays were sung, accompanied by music. If we remember that the Gael are dramatic even in conversation, and that masquerading parties (with deer-skin masks) used to visit Anglo-Irish quarters, such as Charlemont, the probability becomes almost a certainty. This piece may, therefore, be the first Tragedy, outside of the classic languages, in the literature of Europe.

FAND AND CUCHULAINN<sup>1</sup> (pp. 113-119).

The ancient tale entitled "The Sick Bed of Cuchulainn and the only Jealousy of Emer" was cited by O'Curry as a specimen of the Irish language, as old and as pure as that of Cormac's Glossary, which dates from the ninth century. Its tone and its theme are more ancient still, and clearly date from pre-Christian times. The following summary will suffice to explain the poems quoted in this work.

The Ultonians were wont to hold a Fair at the feast of Summer's end (November 1st), on the plain of Muir-teimné (now in Louth). Once, at this time, there came upon the lake two lovely birds linked together with gold. Cuchulainn sought to obtain them for his beloved, but his casts, hitherto unerring, now failed; and turning away, depressed, he leaned against a rock and slept. It seemed to him that two women drew near: one in green, one in five-fold crimson. Each in turn smiled on him and smote him with a horse-switch, until he felt near death. When night came he stood up and spoke in his sleep, bidding his friends take him to the Speckled Palace of Emania; but he could neither answer their questions nor converse. He remained in this state till another Summer-end approached, his friends keeping watch and ward about his Couch of Decline. One day an envoy came, who claimed his protection, and addressed him. In a lay, he bade Cuchulainn know that the daughters of Aed Abrat could heal him, that Fand<sup>2</sup> desired to become

<sup>1</sup> "The Sick Bed of Cuchulainn and the only Jealousy of Emer." From "The Yellow Book of Slane." "Atlantis," Vols. I., II. Edited and translated by Professor O'Curry, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Fand had been the bride of the Sea-god Manannan, who had forsaken her.

his bride, and that Liban would come, at Summer-end, to guide him to the Happy Land. Before leaving he gave his name, Aengus son of Aed Abrat.

When he departed Cuchulainn arose, drew his hand across his eyes, spoke, and went forth to the rock where he had slept. There he beheld the green-clad woman approach again : she was Liban, and she invited him to the Fairy Abode in Magh Mell—the Plain of Happiness—where lived her husband Labraid, “quick hand at sword,” amid beautiful women and learned men, in a mansion upheld by columns of silver and of crystal. In guerdon for Cuchulainn’s help in battle for one day, he would give him Fand. Cuchulainn declined to go, on the invitation of a woman, but allowed his charioteer Laeg to go with her. These fared away past the Plain of Races and the Tree of Triumphs, and the fair-green of Emain, until they arrived at the assembly-place of the Forests, where Aed Abrat and his daughters were. Laeg returned with a message from Fand,<sup>1</sup> imploring the champion to come as the battle would begin that day. Laeg sang the beauties of their palace, with its splendid kings, coloured couches, swift steeds, strange crimson and silver trees, fountain, ever-flowing mead-vats, and above all, yellow-haired Fand, fairer than all the women of Erinn. Were Laeg’s all Erinn, and the kingship of the Happy Hills, he would give them, to abide there for ever. Others were beautiful, but she

<sup>1</sup> “Fand now was the daughter of Aed Abrat; ‘aed’ is fire—the fire of the eye is the pupil. ‘Fand’ then is the name of the ‘tear’ which passes over it. It was for her purity she was so named and for her beauty; for there was naught else in being comparable to her.”



took hosts out of their senses. Then Cuchulainn went forth to Fairy Land, encountered the enemy with Labraid, and, coming in triumph from the battle, was welcomed by Fand and her maidens, with the lay: "Splendid stands the Charioteer." Cuchulainn abode there a month; on leaving, it was agreed that Fand should come wherever he wished. She came to Ibar, (now Newry). They were playing chess here, when Fand perceived Cuchulainn's mortal bride, Emer, with fifty maidens, deckt with gold, but armed with green knives, who came to slay her. Cuchulainn took Fand into his chariot for protection, and avoided Emer. After debate, Emer said: "I shall not refuse the woman, if thou followest her. But, indeed, everything red is beautiful, everything new is bright, everything high is lovely, everything common is bitter, everything we are without is prized, everything known is neglected, till all knowledge is known. Thou, Youth," said she, "we were at one time in dignity with thee, and we would be so again, if it were pleasing to thee." And she was overcome with grief. "Thou art pleasing to me," said he, "and thou shalt be pleasing as long as I live."

Then Fand, broken-hearted, exclaimed: "Let me be repudiated." "It were fitter to repudiate me," said Emer. "Not so," said Fand, "it is I who shall be repudiated, and I have long been in peril of it." She fell into great grief and depression, and spoke her "Farewell to Cuchulainn."

Now Manannan had become aware of Fand's danger and he sped thither from the east. "He was in their presence, and no one perceived him but Fand alone." The sight of him filled her with terror. She thought

the Spirit-spouse, who had abandoned her, now came to increase her humiliation, but he had magnanimously come to protect her. She sang her lost estate. "Even if to-day he were nobly constant, my mind loves not jealousy : affection is a subtle thing. It makes its way, without labour."<sup>1</sup> Manannan saluted her, and bade her choose between them. She avowed her preference for Cuchulainn, but he had forsaken her, and so she would return with Manannan who had no queen.<sup>2</sup> Cuchulainn (to whom Manannan was invisible) asked Laeg what had happened, and when it was made clear to him, he ran distraught, without food or drink, among the mountains, and so remained for long.

At last the Druids spoke their incantations over him, and laid hold of his limbs until he had recovered a little of his senses. "He then besought them for a drink. The Druids gave him a drink of forgetfulness. The moment he drank the drink he did not remember Fand, and all the things he had done." Emer also, being in no better state, was given draughts of oblivion ; whilst Manannan shook his cloak between Fand and Cuchulainn so that they should never meet again.

Appended to this legend, there is a concluding statement, seemingly added by some Christian copyist. It explains that "the demoniac power was great before the Faith, and such was its greatness, that the demons used to corporeally tempt the people, and show them delights and secrets, as of how they would be in immortality."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Love will venture in, where it daurna well be seen."—Burns.

<sup>2</sup> The sudden presence of Manannan, invisible to all the actors in this piece, except Fand, suggests the source from which Sprites in modern plays and pantomimes have come.



There are passages here, as in other ancient Gaelic legends, of interest to the physiological psychologist. Unwittingly, the writers have enumerated many signs of extreme nervous excitability in Cuchulainn, such as the distortion of his face in battle, his convulsive leaps, his long inexplicable debility, into which he was thrown by strokes of wands, and from which he rouses suddenly. Symptoms similar, in many respects, are found in cases of "induced lethargy," or hypnotic trance. It is remarkable, also, that when aroused, Cuchulainn seeks a certain place (as if "suggested") and there beholds a vision of Fand. The Druids, by their incantations, seemed to possess the power of inducing hypnosis.

Descriptions such as those given, though exaggerated, were founded on observed facts, and are quite in harmony with our knowledge of neurotic exaltation in Celtic races.

#### COPPER AND BRONZE (AND GOLD) BOATS.

A curious anticipation of modern inventions is found in this passage in "The Sick-bed of Cuchulainn":

"They saw the little copper ship upon the lake before them. They then went into the ship, and they went into the island."—"Atlantis," Vol. IV., p. 381.

Now the extant Irish manuscript from which this is translated was compiled by a grandson of Conn of the poor, an Ulster noble, who died in the year 1031. It is therefore certain that the Irish had conceived the idea of metal ships at a time long anterior to their recent invention. They have also reduced this idea to practice, for their riveted cauldrons in the Royal Irish Academy's

Museum show great skill, and quite lately the model of a small gold ship was found. For mention of a bronze boat, see p. 199.

THE KING'S LAY<sup>1</sup> (pp. 361-372).

This paraphrase is founded on an episode in the tale of "The Sick-bed of Cuchulainn," and supplies a strangely remarkable example of induced hypnosis amongst the ancient Irish. Thus runs the story :

There had been no sovereign over Erin for seven years, and four of its five realms met, in the year of the world 5167, at Tara, to select one who should be king. "They deemed it an evil that the Hill of Supremacy and Lordship of Erin, that is Tara, should be without the rule of king upon it, and they deemed it an evil that the tribes should be without a king's government to judge their houses." They would not take the Ultonians into their council.

In order to discover a suitable person, they prepared a bull-feast, thus : "A white bull was killed, and one man eat enough of his flesh and of his broth ; and a Charm of Truth was pronounced on him by four Druids ; and he saw in a dream the shape of the man who should be made king there, and his form, and his description, and the sort of work that he was engaged in. The man screamed out of his sleep, and described what he saw to the kings, namely, a young noble strong man, with two red streaks around him, and he sitting over the pillow of a man in a decline,

<sup>1</sup> "The Sick-bed of Cuchulainn," etc.

in Emania, the royal capital of the Ultonians." The Druids were thus able to produce what modern medicine has recently recognised as hypnosis.

When the envoy arrives and identifies Lugai, Cuchulainn orally instructs him in the duties of a king. The original is printed as prose, by O'Curry, but is (I think) in irregular "Rosg," composed of brief injunctions, beginning thus in O'Curry's translation: "You shall not be a terrified man in a furious slavish fierce battle. You shall not be flighty, inaccessible, haughty. You shall not be intractable, proud, precipitate, passionate. You shall not be bent down by the intoxication of much wealth."

These injunctions are rendered into English verse, in a very free paraphrase.

#### THE FATE OF THE CHILDREN OF LIR (pp. 154-157).

This, the second "Sorrow of Story," concerns the gifted Dé Danann people. The tale relates that, after their defeat at Tailtin by the Milesian invaders (A.M. 3500), they held a general assembly, where their nobles chose Bove the Red as king. Lir withdrew in wrath, but after a time espoused Bove's daughter, Aev, and submitted. Twice she bore him twins (one of whom, Fionnuala, was a girl), then she died. Lir survived through the love he bore his children, and espoused his dead wife's sister, Aifa. For a time she loved them also, then sickened with jealousy, plotted their death, and, failing in that design, changed them by druidic power into swans, dooming them to abide for a long period on Loch Derryvara, in Meath; for a second period on the current of the Moyle (now the Mull) of

Cantire, and for a third period on the sea of Erris (Mayo). They should never recover human forms until the Tonsured (St. Patrick) came to Erinn. When Bove the king, a mighty Druid, heard of the crime he transformed Aifa into what she most hated, a demon of the air. It was ordered that henceforth no swan should be killed in Erinn, and even still, as O'Curry wrote, it is considered that an ill fate follows their killing.

The prose narrative is interspersed by lays, in which Fionnuala describes, and laments their fate. The most pathetic are those given in this volume, in which she contrasts their bitter exile on the Moyle with the former delights of home; and where, when the term of banishment is over, coming back joyful to their native city, she tells how they find it empty, desolate, overgrown with weeds and forests.

The end of their doom came with the coming of Christianity. On a day, the brothers heard a strange sound, and were greatly alarmed, but Fionnuala bade them rejoice, in a little lay :

“Hark, the cleric's bell now rings,  
Rise, and raise aloft your wings;  
Thank the True God for that voice  
Listen, grateful, and rejoice.

“Right it is that he should reign  
Who shall part you from your pain;  
Part you from rude rock pillows  
And part you from rough billows.

“Hence, I rede you now give ear,  
Gentle Children of King Lir!  
Let us faith in heaven sing  
While the cleric's bell doth ring.”

This old romantic tale has supplied themes to Moore, Dr. Todhunter, Dr. Douglas Hyde, Mrs. Katharine Tynan-Hinkson, and some others.

FATE OF THE CHILDREN OF TUIRENN<sup>1</sup> (p. 203).

In this, the third of "The Sorrows of Story," the visible and the invisible, the historical and the mythical are mingled. This summary will suffice :

Nuad of the Silver Hand was sovereign of the fair and skilful Dé Dananns. At this time the Fomorians, another section of the ancient Northmen, levied tribute on the Dé Dananns, which was paid each year at the Hill of Usna (in Westmeath), which was also named Balor's Hill, where the five parts of Erin met. The king had called an assembly. Soon they beheld an army advance, whose chief was radiant as the sun at setting. This was Lugh the Long-handed, chief of the Fairy Cavalcade, a friend of the Dé Dananns. When the grim Fomorian tax gatherers appeared, Lugh fell upon them and slew all but nine, whom he spared to go as envoys to Lochlann (*i.e.*, Norway), where their king, Balor, ruled—who was Lugh's grandsire.

Balor, on hearing the tidings, sped his son Breas with ships and men, who promised to bring the head of Lugh, the Ioldanach (craft master) to Berbe.<sup>2</sup> Then the Fomorian king, following Breas to the port, made a mighty menace :

"Give battle to the Ioldanach and cut off his head,"

<sup>1</sup> "Atlantis," Vol. IV. Text edited and translated by Professor O'Curry.

<sup>2</sup> This may be intended for Bergen.

he said, "and tie that Island which is called Erinn to the stern of your ships and your good barques, and let the dense verging water take its place, and set it upon the north side of Lochlann (Norway), and not one of the Dé Danann people will follow it there till doom."

Breas landed at Easara (now Ballysadare, Sligo) and took the spoil of West Connacht. One morning he cried out amazed at seeing the sunrise in the west—but it was the radiance from the face of Lugh, who led the Fairy Cavalcade against him. Lugh saluted and parleyed, being of half Dé Danann, half Fomorian blood; but Breas, refusing restitution, was defeated.

Now Lugh's father had been slain in a blood-feud by the Children of Tuirenn. The earth gave evidence against them. Then in expiation of their offence, they were condemned, with the sanction of the Dé Dananns, to perform nine tasks of exceeding difficulty, the first being to obtain apples from the Hesperides. Their doom was a prolonged torture. The tale is chiefly concerned with their wonderful and perilous adventures. After many dangers and disappointments, wounded to death, they accomplished their last task and returned to Erinn. This ship approached its shores, having suffered on the weary seas, and Brian, the strongest, cried out: "I see Benn Edair, Tuirenn's fort, and Tara of the Kings!" "We were full of health could we see them," exclaimed another, "and for thine honour's love, raise our heads on thy breast that we may see Erinn from us, and then—come life or death, we care not after that."

They reached their country and their fort, wounded to death, and their father bore to Tara the result of their



last victorious effort. All their tasks were done, but they were dying, and their father implored Lugh to give him one of their spoils—a magic skin, which should cover and cure them. Lugh, remembering his own father's fate, remorselessly refused their father's prayer. Then Brian was borne into his presence, bleeding, in order to beseech that his younger brothers at least might be saved. Lugh pitilessly replied that for earth's expanse in gold he would not yield the skin, because of their deed.

Then Brian returned and lay down between his brothers, and they died together. Tuirenn spoke their dirge, and, falling upon the breasts of his sons, his soul went forth from him. They were buried in one grave.

#### DIVER'S DRESS IN THE TUIRENN TALE.

Besides the strange parallel in Balor's speech to a passage in John Bright's, there is a curious anticipation of the diving dress (invented about 1825!) in the following :

“And then Brian put on his water dress, with a transparency of *gloine* (of crystal or glass) upon his head ; and he made a water-leap, and it is said that he was for a fortnight walking in the salt water seeking the Isle of Fianchairé.”—“Atlantis,” Vol. IV., p. 219.

#### LAYS OF FINN AND THE FIANNA: OSSIANIC POEMS (pp. 129-149).

A long and acrid contest has been waged between some of the Gael of Erin and of Alba in relation to this poetry. The cause of the war lay in the strategy of Macpherson, who, in order to exalt the Ossianic poetry

which he professed to translate, depreciated certain later Irish Ossianic lays. He also, indeed, bore ardent testimony to the beauty of Irish love poetry, and the skill of the Irish bards; but this was passed over. When it was ascertained that Macpherson had no original for his pretended translation, the reaction against him made men forget that the poor Highland tutor, who could combine Gaelic fragments into a work so remarkable as his "Ossian," must have been a man of genius.

O'Curry cannot assign any certain date to the poems attributed to Fionn (or Finn) and Oisín (or Ossian). He remarks, however, that some of these compositions are contained in the "Book of Leinster," which was compiled in the early part of the twelfth century, "and certainly from much more ancient books."

Mr. W. F. Skene, in his introduction to the *Dean of Lismore's Book*, states that the oldest poem of this character in MSS. preserved in the Highlands is found prior to the year 1500. Mr. Skene thinks that Ossianic poetry passed through three stages: 1st. There were pure poems common to Ireland and Scotland (and some to the Isle of Man and to Wales); 2nd. Some of the archaic forgotten verses were replaced by a prose narrative; 3rd. "The third class of Ossianic poems belongs principally to that period when, during the sway of the Lords of the Isles, Irish influence was so much felt on the language and literature of the Highlands, and when the Highland bards and Seannachies were trained in bardic schools presided over by Irish bards of eminence."

Though I believe, with Mr. Skene, that in many cases a later prose romance enshrines archaic poems, I also believe that, in some cases, as in "The Fate of the



Children of Usnach," there was another order of composition. Here we had the story presented in dramatic form, with ancient lays introduced to be sung, just as some of Shakespeare's dramas include older English ballads.

The most impressive fact in connection with these ancient poems is their immense vitality. Thus Hector Mac Lean, the Bard of Islay, in a preface to the "Ultonian Hero-Ballads"<sup>1</sup> says: "These ballads have for many centuries been sung and rehearsed in the Highlands. There have been many who could sing 'Fraoch' till very lately in Islay. A few years ago Angus Mac Eachern often sang and rehearsed 'Conlaoch,' and many other old Gaelic poems, but there are few left now in Islay who can sing old Gaelic ballads or rehearse old Gaelic poems."

"In Ireland," O'Curry writes, "I have heard my father sing these Ossianic poems, and remember distinctly the air and the manner of their singing." Previous to this there had been a teacher, named O'Brien, "who spent much of his time in my father's house," O'Curry adds, "and who was the best singer of Oisín's poems that his contemporaries had ever heard. He had a rich and powerful voice; and often, on a calm summer day, he would go with a party into a boat on the lower Shannon, at my native place, where the river is eight miles wide; and having rowed to the middle of the river, they used to lie on their oars . . . on which occasions O'Brien was always prepared to sing his choicest pieces, among which were no greater favourites than Oisín's poems. So power-

<sup>1</sup> "Ultonian Hero-Ballads: collected in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland," by Hector Mac Lean. Glasgow: Sinclair, 1892. The Mac Leans claim descent from the Irish Fitzgeralds, as the Mac Leods from the last Norse king of Man.

ful was the singer's voice that it often reached the shores at either side of the boat, in Clare and Kerry, and often called the labouring men and women from the neighbouring fields at both sides down to the water's edge to enjoy the strains of the music."

How noble and astonishing would such statements seem if they related to the peasantry of other countries! If the Venetian boatmen were heard singing Dante from their gondolas, the Norman peasants the Romance of Roland, the Spanish the lays of the Cid Campeador, the German the Nibelungenlied, the Norse the Eddas—if the English peasants assembled to sing the verse of Chaucer, Layamon's "Brut," or the "Battle of Brunanburh," there would be just and general praise, with wise and generous encouragement. A different policy directed the extinction of the intellectual inheritance of the Gael, because pigmy prejudice ruled where large intelligence would have guided.

DIRGE FOR CAEL, BY CRÉDÉ, OR GELGEIS (p. 137).

When the great battle of Ventry Harbour, famed in Irish romance, was over, Crédé and other gentle and simple women of Erin went over the shoreward region seeking the bodies of their husbands on the field of slaughter. Whilst still searching, Crédé observed a heron risking her own life to defend her two younglings against a fierce fox. "No wonder I should love my gentle comrade," she said, "when a bird is in such anguish over its birds." Then she heard the stag on the mountain over the bay, belling lamentably from pass to pass, for his dead hind. They had dwelt in the forest nine years together, and now, for nineteen days, he had touched

neither grass nor water, mourning her loss. "No shame for me to find death through grief for Cael," said Crédé, "when the stag is shortening his life for a hind." Then she met Fergus on the battle-field, and asked had he tidings of Cael for her. "I have," answered Fergus, "for he and the chief of the household of the King of the World (the invader) have drowned each other." "Little the need for me to bewail Cael and the Clanna Baiscné, for the birds and the billows do strongly bewail them." She sang his death-song, and when it was ended, the soul of Crédé parted from her body for grief of Cael, the son of Crimtann. Her grave was made over Ventry, a stone was raised above her tomb, and her funeral games were celebrated.

This account of the poem is summarised from the translation given by Professor Kuno Meyer,<sup>1</sup> who states that the Bodleian manuscript from which it was taken dates from the fourteenth century, and was written out for the Lady Saiv O'Maillé.

One episode in the romance is peculiarly chivalric and pathetic. When the news spread that Erinn had been invaded, the aged King of Ulster lamented his inability to march against them. His only son, Goll, a boy of thirteen, offered to go, but was forbidden on account of his years, and confined. He, however, could not bear to remain aloof, and, taking arms from Emania, he and his twelve foster-brothers escaped to the battle-field. The twelve youths fell in the fight, and Goll, seized with

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, "Anecdota Oxon." Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885. Another version is given in "Sylva Gadelica" by Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady, in which the heroine is identified as Crédé.

grief and battle-fury, slew the hostile champion, but lost his senses. His madness has been taken as the theme of a powerful poem by Mr. W. B. Yeats.

ST. COLUMBANUS : AN EPOCH-MAKING POEM (p. 51).

In the evolution of European verse, one poem, the epistle of St. Columbanus to Fedolius, deserves a most prominent place. It has been mentioned with praise because of its singular classic form and grace and ethical interest by several writers. None has discovered that it is the first Latin poem (not being a hymn) which presents a perfect system of vowel or asonant rime. This poem, copied and circulated by his great monastic schools of Annegray, Luxueil, and Bobbio, by that of his famous disciple St. Gall, and by the Irish professors of the School of Charlemagne, and of the Palace, must have exercised a controlling influence over the emerging literatures of Europe. Not less important than its asonance is the fact that it introduces into Latin verse the use of returning words, or burthens, with variations, which supply the vital germs of the rondeau and the ballade. It is also very curious that St. Columbanus describes how to construct his poem, just as Voiture told how to make a rondeau and La Fontaine a ballade. The Gaelic precursor of the rondeau is seen in St. Columba's short poem, "The Fall of the Book-Satchels." St. Columbanus died in 615, and, in a few hexameters accompanying this light Adonic verse, he makes a touching allusion to his debility and age. He died soon after.

To appreciate the harmonious riming, the vowels should be pronounced in the Continental manner : we must also

remember that the Irish (and the Spaniards after them) recognize rime between the "slender" vowels, i, e (and here æ), and amongst the broad vowels, a, o, u. Now, in this poem, the dissyllabic rimes are so chosen as to produce the fullest effect and variety. Thus we find, (1) a slender and a broad vowel end-rime (*quæso, versu*); then, (2) a broad and a slender (*—ali, nobis*); next, two broad vowels (*—orum, parua*); and lastly (4) two slender vowels (*—enter, redde*). Again, these rimes are varied in distribution, so that sometimes they alternate, sometimes several of the same kind are grouped together—an early suggestion of *la poésie libre*.

This discovery seems of such importance to the history of European literature that I quote the poem in full, ranging the lines according to their asonant rimes.

EPISTOLA COLUMBANI AD FEDOLIUM.<sup>1</sup>

Accipe, quæso,	Lætificabit
Nunc bipedali	Pagina mentes.
Condita uersu	
Carminulorum	Non ego posco
Munera parua :	Nunc perituræ
Tuque frequenter	Munera gazæ :
Mutua nobis	Non quod auarus
Obsequiorum	Semper egendo
Debita redde.	Congregat aurum :
Nam uelut æstu,	Quod sapientum
Flantibus Austris,	Lumina cæcat
Arida gaudent	Et uelut ignis
Imbribus arua	Flamma perurit
Sic tua nostras	Improba corda.
Missa frequenter	Sæpe nefanda

<sup>1</sup> Ex. MSS. bibliothecæ monasterii S. Galli, anno 1604 a M. Goldasto et Henr. Canisia edita. In *Veterum Epistolarum Hibernicarum Sylloge*. Usserius, 1632.

Crimina multis  
 Suggestit auri  
 Dira cupido,  
 E quibus ista  
 Nunc tibi pauca  
 Tempore prisco  
 Gesta retexam.  
 Extitit ingens  
 Causa malorum  
 Aurea pellis.  
 Corruit auri  
 Munere paruo  
 Cœna Dearum ;  
 Ac tribus illis  
 Maxima lis est  
 Orta Deabus.  
 Hinc populavit  
 Trojugenarum  
 Ditia regna  
 Dorica pubes.  
 Juraque legum  
 Fasque fidesque  
 Rumpitur auro.  
 Impia quippe  
 Pygmalionis  
 Regis ob aurum  
 Gesta leguntur.  
 Sic Polydorum  
 Hospes auarus  
 Incitus auro  
 Fraude necavit.  
 Fœmina sæpe  
 Perdit ob aurum  
 Casta pudorem.  
 Non Jouis auri  
 Fluxit in imbre :  
 Sed quod adulter  
 Obtulit aurum

Aureus ille  
 Fingitur imber.  
 Amphiarum  
 Prodidit auro  
 Perfida conjunx  
 Hectoris heros  
 Uendidit auro  
 Corpus Achilles  
 Et reserari  
 Munere certo  
 Nigra feruntur  
 Limina Ditis.  
 Nunc ego possem  
 Plura referre  
 Ni breuitatis  
 Causa uetaret.  
 Hac tibi, Frater  
 Inclyte, parua  
 Litterularum  
 Munera mittens,  
 Suggestero uanas  
 Linquere curas.  
 Desine, quæso,  
 Nunc animosos  
 Pascere pingui  
 Farre caballos :  
 Lucraque lucris  
 Accumulando,  
 Desine nummis  
 Addere nummos.  
 Ut quid iniquis  
 Consociaris,  
 Munera quarum  
 Crebra seceptas ?  
 Odit iniqui  
 Munera Christus.  
 Hæc sapienti  
 Despicienda,

Qui fugitiuæ	Inde sequenti
Atque caducæ	Parte trochæus
Cernere debet	Proximus illi
Tempora uitæ.	Rite locetur.
Sufficet autem	Sæpe duabus
Ista loquaci	Claudere longis
Nunc cecinisse	Ultima versus
Carmina uersu.	Iure licebit.
Nam nova forsan	Tu modo, Frater
Esse videtur	Alme Fedoli,
Ista legenti	Nectare nobis
Formula uersus.	Dulcior omni,
Sed tamen illa	Floridiora
Trojugenarum	Doctiloquorum
Inclyta uates	Carmina linquens,
Nomina Sappho,	Frivola nostra
Uersibus istis	Suscipe lætus.
Dulce solebat	Sic tibi Christus
Edere carmen.	Arbiter orbis
Si tibi cura	Omnipotentis
Forte uolenti	Unica proles,
Carmina tali	Dulcia uitæ
Condere uersu,	Guadia reddat :
Semper et unus	Qui sine fine,
Ordine certo	Nomine Patris
Dactylus istic	Cuncta gubernans
Incipiat pes :	Regnat in æuum.

SEDULIUS: BARDIC POEM IN LATIN (p. 54).

Whilst the great bard, Sedulius, in the fifth century gave in his "Carmen Paschale" the first Christian epic, another Sedulius, in the ninth century, obtained distinction in lighter verse, as well as in prose. Appearing at the time it did, the graceful poetry of the later Sedulius must have greatly influenced the nascent literatures of Europe. Preserving the Latin metrical forms, he infused into the



structure of his verse the subtle and profuse Irish rime, a fact which has passed unnoticed by his learned editor, Herr Duemmler.<sup>1</sup>

Sedulius's poem, "The Contest of the Rose and the Lily"—which should have been translated by Moore, so kindred in spirit—is given here. In the first two stanzas I have marked the bardic alliteration and other rimes :

DE ROSÆ LILIIQUE CERTAMINE,

SEDULIUS CECINIT.

POETA.

Ciclica quadrifidis currebant tempora metis,  
uernabat uario tellus decorataque peplo,  
lacteo cum roseis certabant lilia sertis,  
cum rosa sic croceo sermones prompserat ore :

ROSA.

Purpura dat regnum, fit purpura gloria regni,  
regibus ingrato uilescunt alba colore,  
albida pallescunt misero marcentia uultu,  
puniceus color est toto uenerabilis orbe.

LILIUM.

Me decus auricomum telluris pulcher Apollo  
diliget ac niueo faciem uestiuit honore ;  
quid, rosa, tanta refers pudibundo perlita fuco  
conscia delicti, uultus tibi nonne rubescit.

---

"Sedulii Scotti Carmina Quadraginta ex Codice Bruxel-  
lensi," edidit Ernestus Duemmler. Halis Saxonum, 1858. Herr  
Duemmler gives forty poems selected from the Brussels Codex,  
which contains eighty-seven. This Codex dates from the  
twelfth century. He states that Sedulius left Ireland between  
840 and 860 ; that he was probably Abbot of St. Lambert's  
Monastery, Liège. He was a friend of Guntharius, Archbishop  
of Cologne, of Haddo, Abbot of Fulda, and mentions five  
fellow Irish priests, Fergus, Marcus, Benchellus, Dermoth,  
and Blandus.



## ROSA.

Sum soror Auroræ diuis cognata supernis  
 et me Phebus amat, rutili sum nuntia Phebi.  
 Lucifer ante meum hilarescit currere uultum  
 ast mihi uirginei decoris rubet alma uenustas.

## LILIUM.

Talia cur tumidis eructas uerba loquelis,  
 quæ tibi dant meritas æterno uulnere penas?  
 nam diadema tui spinis terebratur acutis,  
 eheu! quam miserum laniant spineta rosetum!

## ROSA.

Ut quid deliras uerbis, occata uenustas,  
 quæ tu probra refers plena sunt omnia laude,  
 conditor omnireans spina me sepsit acuta,  
 muniit et roseos præclaro tegmine uultus.

## LILIUM.

Aureoli decoris mihi uertex comitur almus  
 nec sum spinigera crudelis septa corona,  
 profluitat niueis dulci lac ubere mammis,  
 sic holerum dominam me dicunt esse beatam.

## POETA.

Tunc Uer florifera iuuenis pausabat in herba,  
 olli tegmen erat pictum uiridantibus herbis,  
 ipsius ad patulas redolebant balsama nares  
 floripotensque caput sertis redimibat honoris.

## UER.

Pignora cara mei, cur uos contenditis? inquit,  
 gnoscite uos geminas tellure parente sorores,  
 num fas germanas lites agitare superbas?  
 o rosa pulchra, tace tua gloria claret in orbe,  
 regia sed nitidis dominantur lilia sceptris.  
 hinc decus et species uestrum uos laudet in æuum,  
 forma pudiciæ nostris rosa gliscat in hortis  
 splendida Phebeo uos lilia crescite uultu,  
 tu rosa martiribus rutilam das stemmate palmam,  
 lilia uirgineas turbas decorate stolas.

## POETA.

Et tunc Uer genitor geminis dans oscula pacis  
 concordat dulces patrio de more puellas.  
 lilia tunc croceæ dant oscula data sorori  
 illa sed huic ludens spinetis ore momordit.  
 lilia uernigenæ ludum risere puellæ  
 ambroseo bibulum potant et lacte rosetum.  
 at rosa puniceus calathis fert xenia flores  
 ac niueam largo germanam ditat honore.

## VISION POEMS (p. 55).

In the last century many popular ballads, largely Jacobite, were constructed on a common model, though differing in metre. The bard slept, when, suddenly, there came to him a beautiful maiden, more radiant than the sun, who comforted him in sorrow, and foretold a brilliant future for his country. I have found a poem in Latin elegiac verse, dating from the ninth century, constructed in the same manner.<sup>1</sup> So that this Gaelic model (for the author of the Latin was one of the monks of St. Gall's) dates back a thousand years. The type seems to have disappeared for ages and to have been independently revived. This is the opening of the Latin poem, where the vision is Wisdom :

“Umbrifera quadam nocte de pectore somnum  
 Carpebam fessis luminibusque meis,  
 Auricomæ quedam tunc fulgens forma puellæ  
 Clarior enituit sole rubente mihi.  
 Illa puro nimis tangens a vertice celum  
 Florida tellura dum gradiretur ea,  
 Lumina contulerat radiantia fronte superna  
 Quis uidet etheria rura mareque simul.

<sup>1</sup> In “Reliquie Celtiche : il manoscritto irlandese di San Gallo,” Constantino Nigra. Firenze, Torino, Roma, 1872.

Ubera lactifero referebat pectore bina  
 His pascit modicos quos jubet atque rudes.  
 Sic exorsa sua verba pulcherrima virgo  
 Cum gelidus sudor fuderat ossa mea :  
 Quid miser ut trepidus non sum fallentis imago  
 Sed permissu deo uera referre sinor,  
 Cognita gravigenis sic sum ueneranda latinis  
 Utrisque merito signaque dupla veho  
 Inde Sophia vocor grece Sapientia rome,"<sup>1</sup> &c.

QUEEN GORMLAI'S LAMENT (p. 194).

Perhaps the most pathetic and picturesque figure in Irish history is that of Queen Gormlai, who lived in the early part of the tenth century. Daughter of Flann Siona, King of Ireland, she was, according to an old writer, "a very fair, vertuous, and learned damosell." She was first married to Cormac, King of Munster, but he became an ecclesiastic, renounced the marriage, and restored the princess with her dowry to her father. From motives of policy, she was forced to accept King Cearball of Leinster, and her father and husband, with united forces, made war upon Munster, defeated, killed, and beheaded its king-bishop Cormac, in 903. Cearball was wounded, and Gormlai watched over his sick-bed. Seated one day at the foot of his couch, she ventured to regret the mutilation of the dead king-bishop; on which Cearball, in a rage, thrusting forth his foot, threw her upon the floor, in presence of her attendants. She at once left his court, because of this outrage, and sought refuge with her father; but Flann, instead of avenging the insult, sent her back to his ally. Her kinsman, the Prince of Ulster, Niall Glunduv, however, took rapid action, for,

<sup>1</sup> There are some interlinear emendations which I omit.

gathering the northern clans, he marched to Leinster, offered his protection, and secured her a separation and royal maintenance. Cearball also released her from her spousal vows ; but she declined to accept the hand of Niall, and resided with her father. Next year Cearball was killed in battle by the Norse-Irish of Dublin, and then her marriage with Niall was celebrated. Then came a time of prosperity and splendour, when life was full of happiness. Her husband succeeded as Over-king of Ireland. In 917 he planned a great assault upon Dublin, and, confident of triumph, called all comers to share the spoils. The Irish-Norse met him outside their city, at Kilmasog, near Rathfarnham. The cleric, who had refused him a horse to leave the battle-field, administered the last sacraments. Queen Gormlai's elder brother was killed there, her younger brother succeeded and reigned for a time. Then the sovereign power passed away from her father's and her husband's houses.

By King Niall, says the old chronicler, "she had issue a son, who was drowned, upon whose death she made many piteous and learned ditties in Irish." But, "after all which royal marriages she begged from door to door, forsaken of all her friends and allies, and glad to be relieved by her inferiors."

After wanderings, many and sorrowful, she at last received the injury which ultimately proved her death-wound. It came to her in a manner sad and touching as anything poet ever imagined. Having one night taken refuge in an humble hut, she went to sleep on a rude couch. Then : "She dreamed that she saw King Neale Glunduffe, whereupon she got up and sate in her bed to behold him ; whom he for anger would forsake,

and leave the chamber ; and as he was departing in that angry motion (as she thought), she gave a snatch after him, thinking to have taken him by the mantle, to keep him with her, and fell upon one of the bed-sticks of her bed, that it pierced her breast even to the very heart, which received no cure until she died thereof."

During the fatal progress of this "long and grievous wound," she composed some of her "learned and piteous ditties." That of which a translation is given has surely the very spirit of poetry, and lovers of literature owe gratitude to the Dean of Lismore for its preservation.

#### IRISH MUSIC IN LEGENDS (p. 139, &c.).

The ancient Irish were as devoted to music as to literature, and excelled in both. Giraldus Cambrensis, who accompanied King Henry II. to Ireland, and wrote an account of the country, describes the Irish as more skilled in music than any other nation. Two strange legends, translated by O'Curry, may be quoted to show what power was assigned to music in their old imaginative literature.

The "Cruit," or harp, is the first musical instrument mentioned. This reference is found in an ancient historical romance, which professes to describe a battle that was fought, sixteen hundred years before the Christian era, between the Tuata Dé Dananns and the Viking Fomorians. The Fomorians, defeated at Moy Tuiré (Sligo), retired, taking as their captive the harper of the Dagda—a great chief and druid of their foes. Dagda, the King, and the champion of the Dé Dananns followed; and, when the invaders sate at food, the three heroes entered the door of the banqueting house. They saw

the harp hanging mute upon the wall, for the music was spell-bound in it, so that it gave answer to none who essayed its chords, till the Dagda evoked it. Thus he spoke: "Come, Murmur of the Apple Tree; come, Hive of Melody; come, Summer; come, Winter, from the mouths of harps, and hollows and pipes." Then the harp sprang from the wall and rushed through the banquet hall, killing nine foemen in its way, till it came to the Dagda. He clasped it, and played the Three Masterpieces of Music—he played the *Goltrai* (plaintive music), until the Fomorian women wept tears; then he played the *Gentrai* (mirthful music), until their women and young warriors broke into laughter; lastly he played the *Suantrai* (slumberous music), until the whole host fell asleep. Then the three champions retired safely from the midst of their enemies, who had been eager to slay them.

The second story is stranger and wilder still, though the date assigned to the subject—the Battle of the Hill of Almain (now Allen, Kildare),—is later, A.D. 718. The Over-king, Fergal, who lived at Aileach (near Derry) invaded Leinster to exact the Borumean tribute; he brought with him Donnbo, the most accomplished youth in the world, as regards singing, telling royal stories, mounting spears, and equipping steeds. When the monarch had pitched his tent at Almain, he sent to his minstrel Donnbo, and bade him make melody then, as they would give battle in the morning. Donnbo declared that he was unable that night, "but wherever thou art to-morrow night, I shall make melody for thee. Let the king's fool<sup>1</sup> amuse thee this night." The battle

<sup>1</sup> It is curious that motley was the fool's garb, as in Shakespeare's time in England. The rules regarding colours of



was fought, the Northern army defeated, and both minstrel and monarch were slain—the former in defence of his king.

That night, whilst the Leinster chiefs were feasting and relating their exploits, Murcad, the king's son, challenged any Champion to go forth to the battle-field, and return with a token. A Champion of Munster accepted, donned his arms, and went far into the darkness. At last, upon the battle-field, he came to the place where King Fergal's body lay. Then, in the night-silence, he heard Something near, in the air above him, which said (for he heard the words): "Here is a command to you from the King of the Seven Heavens. Make melody for your lord to-night: though to-night ye be all, pipers, trumpeters, and harpers, fallen on the field. Let nor fear nor feebleness hinder ye from performing for Fergal." Then the Warrior heard arise the music of singers, and trumpeters, and pipers, and harpers—a great variety of music he heard, and better heard he never, before or after. And he heard in a cluster of rushes near him a *Dord Fiansa* (a strange strain)—the sweetest of all the world's music. The Warrior went towards it. "Come not nigh me," said the head. "I quest who thou art?" said the Warrior. "I am the Head of Donnbo; I was bound in bond to sing to the king this night: do not thou interrupt." "Where is the body of Fergal?" "'Tis the body that shineth beyond thee, yonder," said the Head. "I ask, shall I take thee also, for thee I would prefer," said the Warrior.

dress given in the Book of Ballimote are these: "Mottled to fools, blue to women, crimson to all kings, green and black to noble laymen, white to pious priests."

“I would that nothing should take me but Christ, God’s Son : give me Christ’s guarantee thou wilt bring me back to my body,” said the Head. “I will bring thee,” said the Warrior. Then he returned to the banquet at Condail,<sup>1</sup> with the Head, and found Leinster drinking. “Hast brought a token with thee?” asked Murcad. “I have brought the Head of Donnbo,” replied the Warrior. “Place it on yonder post,” said Murcad. Then all the assembly knew it to be the Head of Donnbo, and they all exclaimed : “Alas, for thee, O Donnbo, fair was thy countenance ! Make melody for us to-night as thou’st made it for thy lord.” He turned his face towards the wall of the house, that it might be in darkness, and he raised his *Dord Fiansa* on high, and it was sweeter than all music on the surface of the earth, so that all the assembly were wailing and sorrowing, through the mournfulness and tenderness of the melody.<sup>2</sup>

#### MUSIC IN THE IRISH-NORSE KINGDOM (p. 199).

The generosity of the Norse-Irish to the bards, which is extolled in the Irish Viking lay, extended to the minstrels. This is manifest from the following historical fact. About the year 1100, the Welsh, already distinguished in music, had their musical canon regulated by Irish harpers. Now, Griffith ap Conan<sup>3</sup> appealed for these instructors to King Olaf (or Aulaf), son of King Sitric, of Dublin. The Norse-Irish king, acceding to his request, sent a number of eminent harpers, the chier

<sup>1</sup> Now Old Connal, Co. Kildare.

<sup>2</sup> O’Curry, “Manners and Customs,” Vol. III., p. 311 ; translation slightly modified.

<sup>3</sup> “Welsh Archaeology,” Vol. III.



of whom, Olar Gerdawwr, bore a Norse-Irish name, as did each of the company, with the exception of Mathuloch Gwyddell—the Gael.

Irish airs were carried northward, and the late eminent Swedish harper, H. Sjöden, gave examples of several which have survived—with some variations—the “Cruiskeen lán” being one.

#### EARL GERALD THE POET (p. 224).

Here we have an excellent example of the fascination which Irish literature threw over high-natured invaders. The southern branch of the Fitz Gerald's took the name of Fitz Maurice (from Maurice Fitz Gerald). The first Earl of Desmond (South Munster) obtained his title in 1329, and had some literary taste, as an enemy called him “the rhymer,”—and suffered for it. Gerald, the fourth Earl, married a daughter of the Earl of Ormond, and became Lord Justice of Ireland in 1367. He was, therefore, a Palesman of the Pale. But his large and cultured mind passed the frontiers, and obtained a knowledge and a mastery of the language and literature of the ancient nation. In the Annals of the Four Masters, the note of his death bears tribute to his qualities: “Gearoitt, Earl of Desmond, a pleasant and courteous man, surpassed all the foreigners of Erin and a multitude of the Gael in the knowledge and science of the Irish language, in poetry, and history, as well as in other learning.” The Annals of Clonmacnóis give more detail, in the old translator's words: “The Lord Garrett, Earle of Desmond, a nobleman of wonderful bountie, mirth, cheerfulness in conversation, charitable in his deeds, easy of access, a witty and ingenious composer of Irish poetry, and a learned and

profound chronicler, and, in fine, one of the English nobilitie that had Irish learning and professors thereof in greatest reverence of all the English of Ireland, died penitently, after the receipt of the Sacraments of the Holy Church." He also composed some Norman poetry.

The specimen of his Irish poems which has been translated in this volume, as an example of the work of a bard of the Galls (or Foreigners) of Erin, was obtained from the Dean of Lismore's Book (Edinburgh, 1862). This is a selection from the "Gaelic Commonplace Book" of James McGregor, Dean of Lismore, in the Perthshire Highlands, wherein James and Duncan, his brother, committed to writing, in phonetic form, 307 Gaelic poems. Many of these are by Irish bards, of which eight are Earl Gerald's. It was fortunate for Irish literature, that these fine old Highlanders rescued so many lays, which might otherwise have been lost. That Perth should retain what had disappeared from Kerry is one of those strange things which are occasionally found in connection with Irish literature.

But the Norman noble, the English King's Lord Justice and Earl, was not only an Irish bard. He was absorbed completely into the Irish nation, which ever absorbed and assimilated all worthy invaders, and he was promoted into the mythology of the Gael! O'Donovan says: "Tradition still vividly remembers this Garrett: it is said that his spirit appears once in seven years on Lough Gur, where he had a castle." Hardiman gives the legend more fully, though he attaches it to the Great Earl, whose estates of 800,000 acres Elizabeth confiscated: "He is supposed," writes Hardiman, "by the country people, even to this day, to be bound to an enchanted pillar in Lough Gur,

a lake nine miles south of Limerick. They report that, at the end of every seven years he may be seen riding on the lake, on an enchanted charger, and that, when his horse's shoes, which are of silver, are worn out, he will return to life and destroy the enemies of Ireland."

GREEN EYES, GRAY EYES (p. 319).

The Greek poets mention, at least, two colours in speaking of eyes: *θεα κυάνωπις* and *γλαυκῶπις*, blue-eyed and green-eyed. But the latter epithet denotes a pale green, like the sea's tint, at times. The Latin poets use *niger*, black, and *cæruleus*, sea-green, or dark blue. In Gaelic there are two words representing green, one is *glas* meaning both the sea (archaic) and the colour: the other is *uaitne*. Both are used to describe the eyes in poems of praise.

I believe *glas* is employed to describe that colour seen in "Irish gray eyes"—"the grayest of all things blue, the bluest of all things gray." This belief is founded on the comparison of such eyes to sparkling dew. In "Fairy Mary Barry" the maiden's eyes are like dew on springing corn,—hence it may have a tint of green; but in other verses dew alone is the term of comparison. Thus we have:

"Do rioga rosg úr  
Is glaise ná drúcd."

"Thy royal young eyes  
More gray than dew."

again:

"A súile as glaise deallrad  
Ná 'n drúcd air maidin t-samraid."

"Her eyes more grayly radiant  
Than dew on morning of summer."

But the second word for green, *uaitne*, is also used, without such reference, *e.g.* :

“A stoirin an roisg uaitne.”

“O little treasure of the green eyes.”

In this case the bard probably refers to a dark, velvety green which is sometimes noticeable in southern Irish eyes.

English poets do not venture to sing of green eyes, except as associated with jealousy. But Dante describes Beatrice's eyes as emeralds, and Longfellow quotes the commentator Lami, who wrote: “Erano i suoi occhi d'un turchino verdiccio, simile a quel del mare.” “Her eyes were of a greenish hue, similar to that of the sea.” In “The Spanish Gipsy” the poet quotes references to green eyes from Bohl de Faber:—

“Ay, ojelos verdes

\* \* \* \*

Tengo confianza

De mis ojos verdes.”

This characteristic may yield some support to the Milesian claim of Spanish ancestry.

#### EIVLEEN A RÚIN (p. 252).

Professor Blackie in 1867 directed attention to the cultivation of the ancient Celtic language in Ireland. He rebuked the learned men of Ireland and of Britain for their shameless neglect of a noble and historic tongue which had attracted the attention and merited the earnest work of the best philologists of the Continent. “Welshmen of every class,” he said, “cultivate their language with assiduity. Some of the brilliant names in English literature are of Welshmen ; but, being profound English

scholars, they are not the less profound Cymric." Having referred to the abundant products of the press in Wales, he proceeded: "When the Cambri-Briton leaves his barrens for fat and fertile England, or when he crosses the Atlantic to build himself a home on the St. Lawrence or the Mississippi, he carries his language with him, and clings to it with the same tenacity that he strives for wealth. Such feelings are the sureties of National Life. Yet we venture," he added, "to ask for a Welsh parallel to 'Eibhlin a Rúin.'"

"Is breaga na Bénus tu,  
Is ailne na réultan tu,  
Mo Helen gan béim is tu  
A Eibhlin a Rúin.  
Mo rós, mo lil, mo caer is tu,  
Mo stór a bfuil 's an tsaegal so tu,  
Run mo croide is mo cleib is tu  
A Eibhlin a Rúin."

"More beauteous than Venus, far,  
More fair than the midnight star,  
My Helen unstained you are,  
Eivleen a Rúin.  
My red rose, my lily white,  
My treasure on earth so bright,  
Darling! my heart's delight,  
Eivleen a Rúin!"

"The horrible materialism that asks 'where will Irish carry you when you cast loose from Dublin quays?' measures everything by money value or mechanical utility, and contemptuously scouts every measure but its own."

#### THE MORNING POWER OF FAIRIES (pp. 254. 263, &c.).

The dawning hour seems the most favourable to spirit manifestations. This may be observed in the "Dawn

of the Day," and in other poems. The belief is also well shown in an ancient legend, quoted by O'Curry :

Of a morning, Conn of the Hundred Battles fared at sunrise to the ramparts of the Royal Fort at Tara, accompanied by his three Druids, and his three bards ; for he was wont daily to repair thither to watch the firmament, so that no hostile aerial beings should descend upon Erinn, unknown to him. While standing in his wonted place, this morning, Conn trod upon a stone, and immediately it shrieked beneath his feet, so that it could be heard all over Tara and throughout all Bregia. His Druids, after many days, discovered and told him on the same spot that this was the Lia Fáil—the Stone of Fáil (whence Innis-fáil)—the number of its shrieks told the number of kings of his race who should succeed him on the throne.

Conn stood musing on the revelation, when suddenly a mist arose and inclosed them in such darkness, that they could not see each other. Then, in the deep silence, they heard the tramp of a Cavalier approach, and thrice a spear was cast rapidly towards them, coming each time closer. The Druid cried aloud in protest : " It is a violation of the sacred person of a King to cast at Conn in Tara." The Cavalier disclosed himself, saluted the King, and invited all to his mansion. There, on a noble plain, they entered a royal court, and beheld a beautiful princess. Before her was a silver vat full of red ale, a golden ladle, and a golden cup. The Cavalier, assuming the seat at the head of the table, bade all his guests be seated. The princess presented Conn with the bare ribs of a giant ox and giant boar, and the vessels of gold and silver. Then, filling the cup from the ladle, she asked the Knight (who



was one who had returned from the Dead) to whom she should give the cup. He answered "To Conn": the question was then repeated time after time, and the Phantom-Prince named all the kings in succession who should after Conn inherit the sovereignty of Tara.

#### FAIRY WINDS.

"The Irish held the belief," wrote O'Kearney, "that the Red Wind of the Hills, as they called the blasting wind, against the influence of which they had a potent charm, was caused by the rapid evolution of the fairies through the air, while engaged in their battles."

Again: "There was another species of blast which was supposed to destroy fruit and cereal crops as well as having power to injure man and beast: this was caused by the ashes of the Dead deposited in foreign countries, returning on the breeze of summer to settle in the ancestral place of burial, and whatever object came in contact with this dust, in the course of its transit, suffered more or less injury."

It is surprising to find an ancient legend which so closely anticipates a recent medical theory touching the causation of Russian influenza by emanations from Chinese corpses.

#### FAIRY LULLABY (p. 352).

The tune to which these words are sung, is, says Petrie, a beautiful and a very ancient example of the *Suantraide* (or Slumber-music)—one of the three classes of music said to have been brought to Erin by the Tuata Dé Dananns. He points out its strong affinity with the lullaby tunes of Hindostan and of Persia. Professor O'Curry referring to the Irish words, observes: "The

preceding rare and remarkable poem contains more or authentic fairy fact and doctrine than, with some few exceptions, has been ever before published in Ireland. The incident here narrated was believed, at all times, to be of frequent occurrence. It was for the last sixteen hundred years at least, and is still as firmly believed as any fact in the history of this country that the Tuata Dé Dananns, after their overthrow by the Milesians, went to reside in their hills and ancient forts, or in their dwellings in lakes and rivers—that they were in possession of a mortal immortality—and that they had the power to carry off from this visible world, men and women in a living state, but sometimes under the semblance of death. The persons taken off were generally beautiful infants, wanted for those in the hills who have no children, fine young women before marriage, often on the day of marriage, for the young men of the hills who had been invisibly feasting on their growing beauties, perhaps from childhood; young men for the languishing damsels of fairyland; fresh well-looking nurses for their nurseries. The usual mode of abduction was by throwing the object into a sudden fit or trance, and substituting an old man or woman or sickly child. Seemingly,” he continues, “there was no exchange. Sometimes apparent death and actual burial took place, but people divined the invisible action. In other cases, the person was whipt off the brink of a river, lake, or the sea, by a gust of wind and was apparently drowned and lost, but he had only been taken down to some noble mansion and plain, over which the water was but a transparent atmosphere.” They could also inflict punishment, and debility of body and mind on objects of their hatred and jealousy; so, strong men were



stricken by the power of fairy women who were unable to take them away.

The poem is supposedly sung by a mother who was borne away to nurse a fairy's babe ; she was snatched off her palfrey and now, from within the ramparts of a fairy-fort (or old rath) she sees a woman washing at a stream. To her she appeals, whilst assiduously hushing the fairy-babe to sleep. She relates her story, and reveals how she may be delivered, whilst at the close of every stanza she sings the lullaby more loudly to avert suspicion from within the fort. Her husband was to bring a black-hafted skian, or knife ; with this he should stab the first horse of the fairy cavalcade—(once, a second stab undid the deed)—when passing out through the gate of the fort, on the morrow. Then the magic veil would fall, and she would become visible. The herbs at the gate, when pulled, prevented re-capture. She implored quick relief, for "fairy captives are redeemable within a year and a day, but after that they are lost for ever." Professor O'Curry gives some striking instances of the intense belief in fairy influences which came under his notice amongst Protestant and Catholic peasants in 1812 and 1818 in Clare. The most remarkable case, however, was that which gave cause for judicial interference in Tipperary, in the year 1895, when a respectable young farmer believed his wife had fallen a victim to the fairies, and kept night-watch by a fairy-fort or rath, duly prepared to deliver her after maltreating the supposed changeling.

#### LULLABY (p. 351).

Petrie considers the tune to which these words go as a beautiful nurse-tune of remote antiquity. He adds that

the affinity with Eastern melody is not confined to the nurse-tunes of Ireland, but that it is “found in the ancient funeral *caoines* (dirges), as well as in the ploughman’s tunes and other airs of occupation—airs simple indeed in construction, but always touching in expression ;—and I cannot but consider it as an evidence of the early antiquity of such melodies in Ireland, and as an ethnological fact of much historical interest, not hitherto attended to.”

Dr. Joyce wrote in reference to the verses : “These songs, so far as I could learn, were many of them very similar in ideas, expression, and general character. The child was very generally soothed to sleep with the promise of a golden cradle, rocked by the wind on a fine sunny day, under the shade of trees, a combination of circumstances in perfect keeping with the poetical character of the Irish peasantry. The verses were always followed by the burthen ‘Sho-heen sho,’ &c., and when sung by a good voice, the whole melody and song must have had a powerfully soothing effect.”<sup>1</sup>

#### SMITH’S SONG (p. 355).

“‘The Smith’s Song,’” Petrie remarks, “has very evidently been suggested—like Handel’s ‘Harmonious Blacksmith’—by the measured time and varied notes of his hammers striking upon the anvil ; and its melody is therefore one of much interest as an ancient example of imitative music.” O’Curry considers song and tune to be of great antiquity. He has always heard them sung by women to soothe and pacify a cross or crying child, without intending to put it to sleep ; the nurse sang it with a swaying motion, to and fro, and from side

<sup>1</sup> “Ancient Music of Ireland,” p. 46.

to side, or marking the measure by rising on heel and toe alternately. It was also sung as a boy's play, where each player took the name of a hammer, hand-sledge, and big sledge, whilst one sitting in a chair served as the anvil. The Irish words, given in the preceding pages, are taken from O'Daly's (not O'Curry's) version, and the English words are, in part, a substitution for the imperfect Irish original.

SPINNERS' SONGS (pp. 357-359).

The Gaels set their work to music. From the number of song-tunes of occupation extant, Petrie says; it seems certain there was no kind of labour to which song was not wedded. Bunting, speaking of the Spinner's Song, or Luinnioch, describes it as a peculiar species of chaunt, having a well-marked time, and a frequently recurring chorus, or catchword. It is sung at merry-makings and assemblages of the young women, when they meet at "spinnings" or "quiltings," and is accompanied by extemporaneous verses of which each singer successively furnishes a line, "the intervention of the chorus, after each line, gives time for the preparation of the succeeding one by the next singer." "The airs themselves have all the appearance of antiquity."

Professor O'Curry observes that it has been and was, when he wrote, the custom of peasant girls, when engaged in preparing wool or flax, to assemble. Sometimes the daughters of the house, and some helpers, sometimes the girls of two or three neighbouring families formed the group. They sang whilst they worked. Now, each sang in turn a popular song; again, and more frequently, two sang alternately extemporaneous verses to peculiar

airs, reserved for this kind of song. One girl starts the song by saying she had wandered in the wood ; her comrade supplies a motive, and with quiet irony suggests a name which she knows will be rejected, whilst she affects to commend its owner. The jest goes on, until a favourite is found, when a benison is pronounced. Then the rôles are reversed, and the comrade, beginning, gives an opportunity to the other to compliment and quiz, in her turn, "and thus, the song, the wit, and the fun go on, among the girls, two at a time, until they have all played their parts, to their own great pleasure, as well as to the pleasure or displeasure of the group of young men, who are present—generally at night work—according as they find themselves accepted or rejected by their laughing tormentors." <sup>1</sup>

Such amusements speak of quick wit and intelligence among the peasant-girls who could improvise so readily in their native language.

#### PLOUGHMAN'S RIME (p. 356).

Dr. Petrie says : "Amongst the numerous classes of melodies which a people so music-loving as the Irish invented to lighten the labour and beguile the hours devoted to their various occupations, there is perhaps no one of higher interest and certainly no one that I have listened to with a deeper emotion than that class of simple, wild and solemn strains which the ploughman whistles in the field, to soothe or excite the spirit of the toiling animals he guides. The accompanying songs of

<sup>1</sup> O Curry, in Petrie's "Ancient Music of Ireland," p. 84. Dublin : Gill, 1855.

the birds are scarcely so pregnant with sentiment, so touching to a sensitive human soul : and it would be difficult, if not impossible, for a mind not closed to the sense of beauty, to hear such strains without feeling a glow of admiration for the character of a people amongst whom, whatever may have been the faults engendered by untoward circumstances, the primæval susceptibility to the impressions of melody was yet, despite of all destructive influences, so generally retained, and which susceptibility has preserved to us so many indigenous airs, which in their fitness for the purposes for which they were employed, no mere intellectual art could rival."

The "Fead an Oirim," or "Whistle of the Ploughman" should be heard in the quiet twilight glen, in order that its strange sweet pathos may be fully felt. Both Bunting and Petrie agree that such airs belong to the most ancient class ; the latter believes them to have come with the race who introduced the plough. That period was remote, as plough-coulters and sochs of stone are mentioned. The air, to which the ploughman's rime is attached, is peculiar in so far that words are sung with it. This and the words were supplied by Professor O'Curry. He states that, even in his own youth, it was customary to plough with four or six horses. Three men were engaged, one, the ploughman, held the handles, another, "the driver," guided the horses, whilst the "third man," with a forked stick, pressed upon the beam. To the first half of the air they sang, "hóbó, hóbobobó" to encourage the horses ; to the second half the words given. The ploughman led off by addressing the driver, the third man responded at the close ; all merrily repeated the last lines, as a chorus, in unison."

“Sirim dom hilluag mo saethir  
A lenmain alt cen dichill  
Cin neimnitnecht nacrad  
Ocus atrab nid richith.”

BOOK OF DIMNA, A.D. 620

“Would I might have as wages,  
For work these pages given,  
Freedom from critic’s scorning  
And morning peace in heaven.”

TRANSLATION, 1897.



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